THE VICTORIA LIBRARY

FOR GENTLEWOMEN

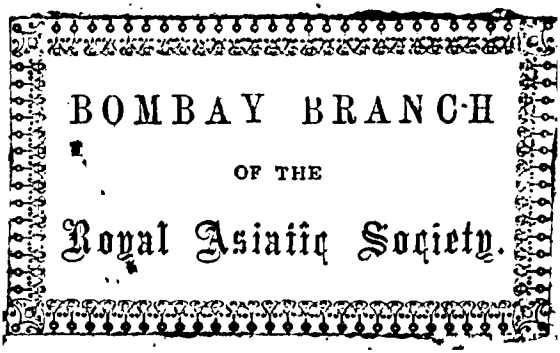
NOT TO BE ISSUED
OUT OF THE LIBRARY.

Grad
391.2
Dou/Gen
98926

00098926

BOOK OF DRESS

MRS. DOUGLAS.



Digitized with financial assistance from
Hermès India
a project facilitated by the Rotary Club of Bombay
on 10 August, 2018

THE VICTORIA LIBRARY FOR GENTLEWOMEN.

Crown 8vo, 6s. each.

NOW READY.

THE GENTLEWOMAN IN SOCIETY.
By Lady Greville.

THE GENTLEWOMAN'S BOOK OF HYGIENE.
By Dr. Kate Mitchell.

THE GENTLEWOMAN'S BOOK OF SPORTS. I.
Edited by Lady Greville.

TWO AUNTS AND A NEPHEW. A Story.
By Miss Betham-Edwards.

THE GENTLEWOMAN AT HOME.
By Mrs. Talbot Coke.

THE GENTLEWOMAN'S BOOK OF GARDENING.
By Mrs. Chamberlain and Mrs. Douglas.

THE GENTLEWOMAN'S BOOK OF ART NEEDLE-WORK. By Miss E. T. Masters.

CLAUDE AND MAUDE. A Story.
By Jean Middlemass.

THE GENTLEWOMAN'S BOOK OF DRESS.
By Mrs. Douglas.

NEXT VOLUME.

THE GENTLEWOMAN'S BOOK OF MUSIC.
By Miss O. L. Prescott.

Under the Patronage of H.M. the Queen and

H.R.H. the Princess of Wales

THE VICTORIA LIBRARY FOR GENTLEWOMEN

THE GENTLEWOMAN'S BOOK OF DRESS

N.N. S. 17a

EDITED BY W. H. DAVENPORT ADAMS

Fanny Douglas

THE GENTLEWOMAN'S BOOK OF DRESS

98926

BY
MRS. DOUGLAS

LIBR
OF TH
BOMB
BRANC
OF TH
ROYAL ASIATI

"*I Love that Beauty should go Beautifully.*"—TENNYSON.

LONDON:
HENRY AND CO.,
BOUVERIE STREET, E.C.

[*All rights reserved.*]

00098926

Printed by Hazell, Watson, & Viney, Ld., London and Aylesbury.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	THE GENTLEWOMAN IN HER DRESS	1
II.	THE HYGIENE OF DRESS	14
III.	COLOUR AND MATERIAL	28
IV.	DRESS AT HOME	43
V.	DRESS IN THE COUNTRY	54
VI.	DRESS IN TOWN	69
VII.	CONCERNING MAGNIFICENCE	79
VIII.	CHILDREN'S DRESS	95
IX.	DRESS AND THE AFFECTIONS	106
X.	RATIONAL DRESS	116
XI.	RECURRENT MODES	128
XII.	DRESS IN HISTORY	142
XIII.	DRESS IN LITERATURE	158
XIV.	DRESS IN PICTURES	179

THE GENTLEWOMAN'S BOOK OF DRESS.

CHAPTER I.

THE GENTLEWOMAN IN HER DRESS.

"THE first care of the savage," says Teufelsdröckh, "was not comfort, but decoration (*Putz*)." And nothing shows more truly that civilisation is but a veneer than that the first thought in dress remains still "not comfort, but decoration."

There are people who say that beauty unadorned is adorned the most; but the "ancient dame" in her dim brocade knew better than that, and, though her daughter was "lovely as a blossom vermeil-white," she bestirred herself to array her in goodly apparel that would make her seem fairer than ever in her lover's eyes.

In choosing her decoration the gentlewoman should bear in mind one simple rule. She should never allow her dress to be her rival,—much less to eclipse her. If people look first at her dress, and last at herself, she may be sure there is something wrong. Dress, like all other decoration, should be only an adjunct, an accessory. It should be pleasing to the eye, for that puts one's friends in good humour; it should be comfortable to wear, for then one may forget it, and enjoy other things as well; and it should be suitable to the occasion, for that has a soothing influence on all around, leaving no room for either carping criticism or self-reproach.

A beautiful woman has more freedom in choosing her dress than a plain one, for, as nothing can surpass her, she may wear virtually anything. Diamonds and pearls and the rich array being all forgot for "*schöne augen*," she may more easily err by neglect than by splendour. Her beauty is a talent that she must put forth to usury, and in order that it may continue to delight all who love the beautiful she must wear nothing unworthy of it. Her dress should be her humble servitor, ready at all times to aid and enhance her charms; her means may necessitate simplicity, but her good

taste should know how to render the poorest garb becoming.

Other women less richly dowered of the gods have not her liberty or her privileges. 'Tis useless for them by costly habit to try and make us forget their homely looks. A plain woman clad in a dress whose delicate tints put her sallow cheeks to shame, whose dainty details accentuate her own lack of beauty, is doubly plain. Yet the same woman in a dress "sober, steadfast, and demure," may become, instead of an unpleasing incongruity, pleasing by her very simplicity; for the eye, undistracted by the toilette, has leisure for the wearer, and often finds in look or smile or hair some lurking hint of beauty. There are indeed few women absolutely without attractions.

Having put dress in its proper place as a servant, and taken her own as its mistress, the gentlewoman should next see that she obtain from her assistant all the service possible. There are few women—even beautiful ones—so absolutely complete and perfect in themselves as to be at home in every style and every colour. A woman should learn first her own deficiencies,—her good points, be they few or many, will prove themselves by their independence of outside aid. If a woman

be tall in proportion to her breadth, let her call on her dress to supply the fulness she lacks, but let it not be supplied too artificially. If she resort to padding, she declares her own weakness;—the woman who will deceive in her dress will not stop there: if, however, she merely allow a pleasing looseness of sleeve and skirt to amend her, it is different. These do not conceal her true figure, yet do they improve it. If she be Juno-like, divinely tall, and of ample proportion, then her divinity gives her independence. She has only to cover herself in garments cut after her own pattern, and the less garniture she use the better; flouncings and fripperies are beneath the dignity of "a daughter of the gods." If she be short and stout, simplicity is again her safety; but as shortness and stoutness go not beautifully together, let her betake herself to a cunning *modiste* who will cut her dress so judiciously as to give her the shape she lacks. A flouncing of lace or some other transparent material below the waist will, without perceptibly increasing her rotundity, accentuate her waist. A slight train on her home-dresses will help to give her the dignity Nature has denied her, and a hat somewhat high—yet not so high as to be out of proportion—will do her the same good service

abroad. If she be short and slight, let her abandon all idea of dignity, and try rather to express the grace and elegance, the bewitching triviality, characteristic of all successful miniatures. Her small make will, if she use it with discretion, be her greatest charm. Everything she wears must be rather too small than too large for her. Her jewels, her dresses, her bonnets, must all be marked rather by minute perfection than by outrageous novelty. A small woman may wear brighter colours than a large one,—humming-birds are delightful, but what if the eagle were decked in colours as gay as theirs? Even its position as sovereign of the air could not hinder us from considering it vulgar. Thus (and in many other ways) may dress express and improve upon the individuality of its wearer.

And here we must pause for a moment to arraign Fashion of high treason to her sovereign mistress—Woman. There never was such a reckless Radical as Madame La Mode. She is no respecter of persons. She would fain make of the kingdom of dress a republic, where all women should be free and equal, and wear the uniform prescribed by a tyrannical Commonwealth. But in this, as in all socialistic schemes, the great fault is the suppression of individuality; and here do we call on all gentlewomen with

proper self-respect to assert themselves, and rebel against the monstrous injustice of it. For instance, a few years ago Dame Fashion lost her head over *La Tosca*, and bade every one, tall or short, slender or robust, wear long, straight Directorate gowns; these became well enough certain stately women, but mocked, right cruelly, the leanness and ill-shapenness of others. It seems a necessity of nature (and of women) that there should be fashions, and that dress should chop and change with every breeze of them; but a woman of taste will neither be the first to adopt a new mode nor the last to leave it. "Faire daughters," said an old Norman chronicler, "I praye ye be not the first to take new shapes and gises of women of strange contrey." The true gentlewoman will exercise a wise abstemiousness in regard to fashion. Its monstrosities in the way of sleeves and headgear she will avoid; its unsuitabilities in the way of trained street-dresses she will withstand; its exactions in regard to colour and material she will defy. Englishwomen have an admirable example in this respect in the Princess of Wales. Never has she so far forgot herself as to yield to the extremest extravagances of the mode. She has the perfect knack of being always in the fashion, and yet always superior to it.

As a rule, the society woman drops a mode as soon as the suburban belle discovers it, and the suburban discards it as soon as 'Arriet lays hold of it. The deep-skirted jacket bodice of two years ago seemed wonderfully distinguished when first seen on elegant women who could afford rich materials, and a cravat and ruffles of the finest lace to go with it. Ellen Terry, as Lucy Ashton, poetised and popularised it; but the same mode became very different after it had worked itself down. An artisan's wife in a coat bodice of cheap and flimsy material, with a vest of the poorest kind of flowered delaine, and a cravat and ruffles of ragged imitation lace, was something to shudder at. Is it not a duty of great ladies to set the fashion of simplicity in their street dresses, and keep their historic revivals and fantastic devices for those inner sanctuaries where the imitative eye of 'Arriet cannot follow?

The fact that this coat bodice was fashionable alike for outdoors and indoors, for everyday wear, and for evening dress, is illustrative of the one-idea'd-ness of fashion. Some brides even shaped the bodices of their wedding gowns coatwise; but there they erred, for the coat-shape is a bit of borrowed masculinity, and surely never should a bride be more feminine than on her marriage day.

To "make her as the man" on that occasion is enough to slay "sweet love" itself.

In respect of garb, the gentlewoman of to-day has reason to be thankful to the century. Never was dress more simple and sensible than now. There are artistic people who rave about the beauty of the Greek attire. It is indeed admirable in a statue or a picture, but what must it have been to wear! The *chiton* is all very well, and suitable enough as a model for a home dinner-gown, or a dress for a quiet dance; but the day for the *himation* will never come again. As we see it in ancient reliefs and sculptures, with its wearers in eternal repose, it is one thing; but the *himation* in actual wear on a breezy day would be quite another. It must have taken its unfortunate owners all their time to hold it up. The present-day woman would be a pitiable spectacle in it. How would she manage, when she wanted to put up her long-sticked *pince-nez* or her parasol? How could she contrive to hail a cab or carry the inevitable parcel? The *himation* of Greece, the *toga* and *pallium* of Rome, the *sagum* of the Ancient Briton, the *palla* of the Keltic women, and the cloak of the Saxon were all virtually the same thing. The real truth of the matter is, that our ancestresses wore

these shapeless and senseless garments because *they knew no better*. They did not know how to cut out a jacket then; *it* is a product of the highest civilisation, and we should be thankful for it. What the Roman ladies must have suffered under their togas no tongue can tell. In admiring them, modern women forget what their own experience must have taught them—that no drapery will remain for more than two seconds in place without an unromantic but indispensable stitch or pin. Could we see these classic dames as they lived, we should probably find that only one-fourth of them really knew how to drape and manage their togas properly; the rest would always look clumsy and untidy.

In yet another way the gentlewoman of to-day has an advantage over her predecessors. She is permitted more splendour than they. In the days when all women were domestic, they stayed at home and spun, and wore simple, useful tunics or gowns, whilst the men went abroad decked in all magnificence. The women then enacted the part of the pea-hen, who is quite cast in the shade by her brilliant husband. It was not till after the Norman Conquest that women began to grow restive and seek out strange devices in their apparel.

But in one thing we have degenerated. In the simple old days there was no part of dress but had its meaning, no part so fantastic that its use was hidden or lost to the casual observer. The *couvre-chef* may have been clumsy, but it *did* cover the head, which is more than the modern bonnet can be said to do. Dress proclaimed not only its own usefulness, but also the rank of the wearer; the Roman's station was known by the edging of his tunic. Nowadays there is no distinction save that of good taste. The charm of symbolic dress we all must feel when looking at a nurse's uniform. Who would not give the rich robes of idleness for the workmanlike simplicity that speaks of usefulness, tenderness, and goodness of heart?

During this generation there have been two movements for reform in dress, each of which has had its influence. The æsthetic movement is past and over, but its effects remain; we shall never be quite so crude and tasteless in our colours as before the days of the lily-worshippers. True, for a time, the æsthetes went over the score in their devotion to half-tones, and grew sickly in their greens, peevish in their yellows, and grievously dim in their reds. Yet they taught us the wisdom of avoiding raw tones, for it is only women of really fresh

complexion who can stand decided blues and reds. The majority of us are vague in our hues, and too distinct radiance in colour only mocks us. Faded rose has been found a wonderfully becoming shade, and terra-cotta will never go wholly out of favour again. What the æsthetes lacked was a sense of form. Their model for a dress seemed a sack, tied round the waist with a string, with two smaller sacks for sleeves, tied in at intervals with more strings. Their hats were modelled on cabbage leaves, and their indefinite curvatures were very trying to all with any true feeling for architecture. We have shown ourselves strong enough to retain the good they taught us, and discard their follies.

The movement in favour of "rational" dress has also taught us much, and has effected an astonishing improvement in our underclothing. The adoption of woollen under-garments has resulted in a great gain in health, and the simplicity of the articles of underwear now worn contrasts agreeably with the needless complexity of those in use before. The necessity of at least one full and undivided skirt will always be recognised by sensible women, but it is a relief no longer to be compelled to wear three or four. These enlightenments are, unfortunately, still confined to the upper classes, and gentlewomen

may do useful work by trying to make them general amongst the lower classes too. It is the poor, who are more exposed to the weather, who really need to learn the benefit of warm, porous, sensible underclothing.

But the "rational" dressers have failed just where the æsthetes did. They have no sense of form, and until they render beautiful their outer garments their following must be small.

To be beautiful is not the only good. The true gentlewoman must also be kindly and thoughtful. She must think of her dress not only in its results, but in its manufacture. Feathers and wings are permissible in a way, but why must so many lovely little birds be slaughtered on her behalf? It is very nice to buy cheap ready-made underclothing; what of those who toiled to make it? Some say, and with truth, that to refrain from buying ready-made things is no benefit, for better low-paid work than none at all; but why not buy your material and give it to some poor woman direct, and pay her honestly? There is much feminine vituperation over the delays of dressmakers, but better wait a few days longer for a gown than keep girls toiling all night, whilst you lie "at home at ease."

There, you say, the fault is with the dressmaker;

and perhaps it is. Her profits are good, and she should increase her staff, at least temporarily; but you, on your hand, can take the trouble to inquire into the matter, and employ only those whose skill is balanced by their humanity.

CHAPTER II.

THE HYGIENE OF DRESS.

THE hygiene of dress is indissolubly associated in my mind with the two contrasting diagrams familiar to all readers on the subject. Two ladies—who seem to have done what Sydney Smith vainly wished to do, taken off their flesh and sat in their bones—exhibit with appalling distinctness the internal condition of the virtuous person who does not tight-lace and the vicious person who does. Each wears alike the same inane and distressing simper, and we feel at once that the artist has a very subtle knowledge of humanity. For is it not a fact that feminine nature is eternally the same, and that the mere addition of hygiene cannot alter it?

The woman who reforms suffers from an excess of fervour, and the sanitary enthusiast is a little apt to forget that the tight-lacer, with all her sins, is still a woman and a sister. She has received so

much vituperation already that I shall not add to it here.

Indeed, like Sir Thomas Browne, "I am of a constitution so general, that it consorts and sympathiseth with all things," and I have it not in my heart to denounce even the tight-lacer. She is a criminal, but she wears her vice becomingly. To the artistic eye her curves are, of course, abrupt, but her *tout ensemble* is charming. Hers is not, indeed, the "sweet neglect" Ben Jonson admired. Plain in her neatness (like Pyrrha), she attracts by her triumphant trimness, her perfection of detail. The tight-lacer is a person who respects herself, and is careful in all departments. Her hair is sure to be becomingly dressed, her ornaments appropriate, her gloves, shoes, and other accessories dainty. She knows she looks well, and the knowledge cheers but not inebriates her—that is to say, she is not exuberantly, belligerently proud of herself like her sanitary rival, but just warmed through by a gentle glow of self-satisfaction. Her happiness radiates outward, for, being pleased, she pleases every one.

The hygienic woman, on the other hand, is generally morose—except when on the war-path. Even in company she cannot forget that she has no stays on. Although the fact is obvious—I may say

painfully obvious—she has not known you half an hour ere she whispers it as a secret in your ears. This leads to dissimulation, and thence to unhappiness on your part. You pretend that you didn't know—that you would never have guessed she didn't wear them. She is delighted, for it is a curious thing that the woman who doesn't wear corsets always expects to look as if she did; whilst she who does would be insulted if you supposed her without them. The next move of the non-corset-wearer is to tell you at what age she ceased to bow the knee to Baal, and then—if you are a woman—your mind is immediately distracted by an internal calculation concerning her age, in which you will probably be wrong, as her peculiar costume generally adds ten years to her looks. You tear yourself away, at last, completely upset. You have lurking doubts concerning your health, and catch yourself, when you think no one's looking, drawing long breaths to test your lungs. You glance surreptitiously at your late companion, and wonder if it be really necessary for the sake of health to look as she does. The probability is that, being a sensible woman, you have stays loose enough for health and tight enough for neatness, and although, perhaps, for a day or two you slacken the laces behind,

ere long you settle down to your old way again, and forget that you have lungs at all.

The hygienic faddist errs in not considering appearances more. The desire of a woman to make herself beautiful is not the mere frivolity the hygienist deems it. Decoration is "the first spiritual want of a barbarous man" (or woman), and, whilst her health and comfort affect her alone, her beauty affects all around. "A woman who does not please is a false note in the harmonies of nature;" and can it be said that the "rational" dresser pleases any one except herself, and does she herself never, when opposite a long mirror, feel a little dubious about the result?

A reform that leaves beauty out of the count will never progress. If corsets are to be abandoned our whole dress must be re-modelled, and re-modelled attractively.

Hygiene has an awkward way of infecting the wrong people. The young and beautiful ignore it, —it is only the woman who has given up decoration in despair who falls back on comfort, talks about health, and tries to reform the world. If we could but for a month reverse the present order of things much good might be done. By putting all the bellicose rational women into corsets, and taking all

the pretty foolish ones out of them, several ends might be gained. The rational woman would enjoy the advantage of feeling neat for a month, and the satisfaction it would afford her could not fail to soothe and mellow her. Thenceforth her justice would be tempered with mercy. As for the pretty ones, it would be interesting to discover if they would really look as nice without corsets as they do with them, and useful statistics concerning their health in both conditions would be gained. And then how delightful it would be to be rid of our waistless and reproachful friends for a time!

To look at the matter seriously, however, it may be presumed that, considering the age to which many women survive it, the average corset is not a deadly thing. The mediæval machine, with its steel and iron framework, must have been torture, but the modern article, in whalebone and jean or silk, is a very different matter. It is, of course, distinctly unnatural, but, if worn with discretion, not necessarily harmful. It is even at times positively useful as an agent for the suppression of fat. The stout woman without a corset would be a monstrosity, and it should be borne in mind that pressure does not injure a mere mass of adipose tissue as it does the vital organs. The too-redundant

matron may therefore consider herself safe as long as she doesn't lace herself red in the face. That is both unbecoming and injudicious.

But there are corsets and corsets, and compression is not their only fault. It is a great mistake to have the corset of close impervious material; for anything that hinders the free passage to and from the body is wrong. Dr. Jaeger has shown the importance of this, and, although he rides his hobby a little hard, his principle is a good one. His knitted and woven woollen corsets are excellent. Nor is beauty sacrificed to comfort in them; for they are amply boned, and of as modish a shape as any.

The Jaeger is not the only hygienic corset. Nearly every stay-maker has his health speciality nowadays. Some are of wool, and some of "cellular" cotton; some pride themselves on their shoulder-straps, and some upon their liberal supply of buttons for fastening the underskirts on with, but this is only adding to the labour of dressing. Most women now are content with one or, at most, two petticoats and a combination. These are of no great weight, and each maker of course maintains that his especial improvement is of the vastest importance. So it is to him and to his trade, but not to any one else.

Women should consider the matter for themselves, and not be too lightly led away by seductive advertisements or plausible fads. The simplest and the most natural things are the best. This is the age of worry; and if we begin to worry as much about our clothes as we do about our vote, our education, and our ethics, it will end by becoming a very vexatious world indeed.

Next to her corset the woman whose decoration overbalances her comfort is most apt to err in her boots. Nor has she the same excuse in this as in the other matter. The fashionable and the hygienic boot are alike painful to the artistic eye. It is strange that, considering how fine a model shoemakers have in the natural foot, they have never yet succeeded in producing a covering for it alike æsthetic and suitable to our climate. The sandal of the East is at once the most natural and beautiful of footgear. It is, of course, impossible out of doors in England, but why should it not be adopted for indoor wear in summer? A woman in a tasteful tea-gown, with her feet in soft yet warm silken stockings, raised only by a simple sandal from the dust and draught of the floor, is in possession of a costume at once perfectly comfortable and perfectly beautiful.

But although it seems impossible for boots to be pretty, they may at least be healthy. Here again Dr. Jaeger steps in. His boots and stockings are amongst the most valuable items of his manufacture. The boots are made of the best leather, soft, yet strong. There is a perforated leather sole, and a woollen one above it, and the boot is, in addition, ventilated by air-holes behind. All who are troubled with warm feet in summer, and cold ones in winter, will at once see the advantages of these improvements. The boot is kept thoroughly fresh—for there is no better antidote to perspiration than air. The boots are lined with thin woollen material, and this combines with the woollen sole to keep the foot admirably warm in winter. A gentlewoman clad thus need

> "Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
> Nor the furious winter's rages."

Even the east wind, that last worst enemy of womenkind, may play about her ankles and leave her unharmed.

The Jaeger stocking has also several especial merits. All women with hot feet know how difficult it is to get black stockings that will retain their own dye. The sole, toe, and heel are the parts where the colour soonest gives way, and these, in

the Jaeger stocking, are of the natural-coloured wool. The rest is, of course, black, and of the finest, softest wool, so that even those unaccustomed to woollen stockings before can wear them without having their skins irritated or chafed. Those who cannot afford to wear silk, and cannot endure the rougher surface of the ordinary woollen hosiery, will find them excellent.

Cotton and linen are alike abominable for footwear. Hard to walk in, quick to wear, annoying to mend, they seem to have every fault and not one virtue. For women with warm or tender feet they are alike unhealthy and uncomfortable. They get hard with the perspiration, and lose colour more quickly than any others. They are indeed most unpleasant and unprofitable.

It does not seem that people have ever been very sensible in their methods of clothing their feet. In one of Xenophon's dialogues Ischomachus reproaches his wife for her high heels; and in the ballad of Sir Patrick Spens there is a sly hit at mediæval foppishness in this respect, for

> "Laith, laith, were our gude Scots lords
> To wet their cork-heeled shoon."

But still there have always been intervals of sanity. A pair of shoes, dating from Roman days,

and found early in this century, were remarkable for being both hygienic and beautiful. They were of purple leather, with a hexagonal design worked on them in gold. The soles were virtuously flat, yet the beauty of colour and material was such as to make one forget the uninteresting form.

But boots and corsets are not the only things in which we err against Hygeia. A great deal of the neuralgia prevalent of late years may be traced to the inconsequent variety of our millinery. Not that I would join in the "rational" woman's wholesale condemnation of small hats and bonnets. The woman with hair has her privileges. 'Tis a pity for those whose heads are rich with "prodigal auburn," or "alight with curls," to hide it all under the mushroom hat that alone seems approved of reason. The more hair a woman has the less hat she requires. It is just as bad to load the head as to unnecessarily expose it, and nothing protects the head so naturally and healthily as the hair. The hat is, after all, but an artificial product, an evolution of civilisation.

It should be borne in mind that it is the top of the head that requires protection from the sun in summer and the cold in winter, and if the hair be scanty or not worn on the top of the head, something

in the way of millinery that will really act as a covering must be worn instead.

Yet the diversity of feminine headgear is not without its uses. It is the inexplicable devotion of the "stronger" vessel to close, impervious materials, such as felt and beaver, that accounts most satisfactorily for his unenviable baldness.

From heads it is an easy and a natural transition to tails. All anti-Darwinians should shun a train. It is harrowingly suggestive of the ancestral ape, and, when the wind seizes it out of doors, it has a way of twisting and twirling it into a likeness of the quadrupedal tail that is almost too vivid to be agreeable.

"To think," as "The Citizen of the World" said to his friend, Fum Hoam, "that a lady acquires additional respect from fifteen yards of trailing taffeta!"

The recent mode of wearing loose cloaks out of doors is only allowable for idle women who do not require to exert themselves, and have time to devote their energies to keeping their mantles in place so that their chests are covered. The busy woman, who has to bustle about, hail cabs, and carry her own parcels, had better retain the useful and hygienic jacket. Nor are the newest waterproofs, of water-

proofed tweed, to be recommended. Mackintoshes are not only unhealthy, but uncomfortable; therefore as soon as a shower is over we hasten to take them off. The tweed waterproofs are becoming, and we keep them on; so that in the end they are rather less hygienic than their predecessors. Better half an hour of a mackintosh than three hours of its tweed counterfeit.

Veils are disapproved by the sanitary; yet who would be wholly without them? To many they are a refuge and a delight. Some women cannot endure disorder, and to them the veil is indispensable. It confines errant hairs and fluttering feathers, and gives to them a delicious air of primness, enchanting because of its unreality. As a hygienic error the veil may be ranked with the *migraine*. It is a mystifying, unaccountable, unnecessary, and yet essential part of the "lesser man."

Woman errs when she tries to "brace" herself. There are those who declare that all weighty clothing must be carried from the shoulder; but this is a fallacy that must have originated with some man ignorant of the physiological differences between the sexes. The shoulders are the strongest part of a man, but the pelvic bones or "haunches" are the strongest parts of a woman. The habits

that caused a man to brace his lower garments on to his shoulders, and a woman to button them round her waist, are therefore inspired by natural and healthy instincts. Any woman who has tried to carry a heavy tailor-made skirt by braces over her shoulders knows how the braces hurt and annoy the collar-bone. Mothers of the middle class can tell how girls who carry their books to school in bags strapped from the shoulder very quickly get their shoulders out of shape.

Some women seem to consider themselves sufficiently protected in winter by a fur cape, collaret, or boa. A neat tailor-made gown and an ample boa of good fur is certainly a very trim and dainty costume, but it is a most treacherous one, as it leaves some of the most vital parts very insufficiently protected. A jacket of the same material as the dress would not detract much from the trim effect, and would make all the difference from a hygienic point of view.

In conclusion it may be said that there are very few women whose clothes are sanitary at all points; and to those unacquainted with the laws that govern health, the strictures of the better instructed must seem a trifle bewildering. It would almost seem at times as if there were nothing superior to criticism;

and in the weariness born of despair the distracted and unhygienic one feels as if the only thing left was to return to primeval simplicity and, arrayed in a string of beads and a sheepskin, defy the elements to do their worst.

A woman's own feelings are her safest guides. So long as she be comfortable, warm, and healthy, her clothing must be right; but if, at any time, she finds herself ill at ease, chilled, or out of sorts, let her consult her own common sense as to the reason, and, having found it, let her not allow either her vanity, her *modiste*, or her prejudices to hinder her from setting the matter right at once and for ever.

CHAPTER III.

COLOUR AND MATERIAL.

"COLOURS," says Leigh Hunt, "are the smiles of Nature"; but, unfortunately, Nature, being a prodigal, inconsiderate person, flings them abroad a little recklessly, and half the women end in adopting those not meant for them at all.

There never was such a colourless age as ours. Some people will persist in saying it was the Puritans who deadened our sense of colour; but long after the sober Roundheads were laid in the dust colour reigned and triumphed. It was very outspoken and unabashed in Restoration days—witness the brilliance of the Lely and Kneller beauties—and it refined and etherealised itself later on, until, in the eighteenth century, it became the very expression of poetry. It was in reality the French Revolution that first dimmed its beauty. *La Guillotine* is the stern monitress who stands between the old world and the new. Until her

advent it was a careless, thoughtless, heartless, yet beautiful world, full of courtly men in wonderful coats and costly lace, and bright with "Dear Lady Disdains" in rich brocades and rustling fans, their charming empty heads all a-flutter with powder, ribbons, and feathers.

But *la Guillotine* tore aside the beautiful painted curtain, and showed the rags and bones behind, and the world has never been quite so merry since. There are women still who dress for beauty, and beauty alone; but these are rare, and valuable on account of their rarity. The modern woman, the woman with fads, the woman who cries for a vote as a child for the moon, disregards beauty, and has no feeling for colour. Our dress is much more sensible, but it is sad in hue, simple and unimaginative in design. But although the practice of colour has fallen into abeyance, the love of it is not yet wholly dead, and at times this sober livery of sense makes us melancholy, and we long uselessly for the brilliant radiance of the fairy world of the past. "Beyond the dry line of knowledge lies beauty," says Leigh Hunt; and now, having striven to assimilate sense to costume, we fain would go further in search of beauty.

The sense of colour in the early half of this

century was distinctly crude. The raw grass-greens, the assertive browns, the decided pinks, and too daring blues of our grandmothers make us shiver. Our perception of the finer tones dates, more or less, from the days of the æsthetic revival. It was a time of absurdity and vapidity, but its name was accurate,—it *was* an æsthetic revival. Messrs. Liberty with their fine taste in materials and tones did much, and still do much, to help it. From their admirable suggestions on "Colour and Form" I select a few of the simpler hints.

"Women with red or auburn hair, blue eyes, and a bright colour should," they say, "wear cream, white, blue-green, black, olive-green, pale yellow, grey-green, bottle-green, stone-grey and amber,"—*i.e.*, women whose colour is bright require only demi-tones as a background. There is a shade of red hair that verges on gold which is wonderfully easy to dress up to. It is so radiant in itself as to need no other colour, and any dark shade, like myrtle green or chestnut brown, that throws it into relief, is sufficient to frame its brightness. Some red-haired women seem to suffer from an errant weakness for a cold blue that makes their colouring even more fiery than before. Others wear pinks and crimsons with a view to outshining their

hair, and make it seem quiet by contrast, but this is even worse. A woman should accept her hair, and try neither to rival nor contradict to it, but rather to harmonise it.

"Women with black hair, blue or black eyes, and pale skins" (to return to Messrs. Liberty) "should wear yellow-amber, pale-pink, blue-grey, black, white, blue (light or dark), red (light or dark)." These are monochrome women, and, like all other mezzotints, they look well in tinted mounts. A woman of this type, however, should not wear unrelieved black. Any touch of bright colour, however sparing, is an improvement.

Messrs. Liberty's third class of complexion, "women with chestnut hair, hazel eyes, and pale skin," should, according to them, adopt "olive-green, purple, pale yellow, blue (light or dark), black, old-gold, burnt cream, cream, or any other evasive pale shade."

All "nut-brown maids" look well in brown. An autumn leaf is their safest guide, and any colour it contains will well befit them, and help to maintain the russet character of their beauty.

The golden and flaxen-haired woman, although Messrs. Liberty ignore her, has the greatest freedom of all, for with a delicate complexion and colouring

every charming colour is in harmony. Pale blues and greens, heliotrope, grey, white, and cream become her, and every dark colour is delightful, inasmuch as it accentuates her fairness.

Colour is above all a luxury. The rich may indulge in the greatest diversity, for they alone can afford to complete their different toilettes in all their details. A poor gentlewoman has, unfortunately, to economise first of all in colour. She dare not indulge in a bright dress if she cannot afford to have all the etceteras in keeping. She may diversify her gowns at the expense of her millinery, by making a black hat and bonnet do duty with several brilliant costumes, or she may be sober and limited in her dresses, and atone by the variety and gaiety of her headgear.

Fashion is never more unreasonable than in the matter of colour. When she ordains that women of all complexions shall dress in one of two or three dominant shades, it only remains for women of taste to rebel against her tyranny. The way in which yellow dresses became the mode in France well illustrates the caprice of the fickle jade.

When Mdlle. Mars was performing in Lyons

a silk merchant called on her one day, and asked leave to present her with a dress. It proved to be a very rich velvet, and yellow, a colour not then worn. He offered her the dress on condition that she wore it in public. Mdlle. Mars hesitated. What woman dare brave the mode? The exquisite texture of the material tempted her, and at last overcame her. She took the dress, and sent it to her *modiste*. It came back exquisitely made, and became her to a marvel,—but the colour! "Je ne veux pas avoir l'air du canari!" she cried ruefully as she surveyed herself in the glass.

Honour, however, triumphed over the fear of ridicule; she wore the dress, and straightway yellow dresses were the mode.

That colour is the chiefest bit of dress is proved by the homage paid it by poets. Painters worship both form and colour, but poets especially delight in the latter.

Loveliest are the robes whose colours are rather suggested than declared. Think of the "sky-robes spun out of Iris woof" of the "attendant spirit" in *Comus*—of Enid's new dress,

> "like colours of a shell
> That keeps the wear and polish of the wave."

Who would not wish for a dress

"Where like a shoaling sea the lovely blue
Played into green"?

Or what woman's heart does not stir with pleasure when reading of the

"azurn sheen
Of turkis blue, and em'rald green"?

The poems of James I. of Scotland, and of Gawin Douglas in particular, teem with colour. Think how

"Fresh Aurore, to mighty Tithon spouse,
Issued from her saffron bed and ivory house
In crimson clad and grained violet,
With sanguine cape, the selvage purpurate."

Aurore's taste was untutored, but royal in its magnificence. What could be more brilliant than the fair lady King James espied out of his prison window?

"Her golden hair and rich attire
In fret-wise couched was with pearlés white
And greaté rubies gleaming as the fire,
With many an emerald and fair sapphire.
And on her head a chaplet fresh of hue,
Of plumés parted red and white and blue."

The hues were fresh indeed, and the attire seems to us of unnecessary splendour for an early morning walk; but how her lover revels in its gaiety! She pleased him, and was, no doubt, therewith content.

Gautier has a poem "à une robe rose" whose shade is "frais comme un cœur de rose-thé," and into whose tissues he weaves some pretty fantasies born of their colour.

> "Et ces plis roses sont les lèvres
> De mes désirs inapaisés,
> Mettant au corps dont tu les sèvres
> Une tunique de baisers."

What is his famous "Symphonie en blanc majeur" but a poem of colour?

Balzac says that woman's character finds expression in her favourite colour. A woman who prefers orange and green gowns is, he thinks, quarrelsome. It takes two to make a quarrel, and a woman perpetually in these bilious shades would certainly irritate any one. Those who wear yellow hats, and who go clad in black without cause, are not to be trusted, he says. In this last dictum there seems truth. There are certain women, "who don't like to be noticed," who are always turning up in odd corners, in unrecognisable black. As for yellow hats, I think any woman with something to conceal would avoid them; but perhaps M. Balzac knew some one with a yellow hat who was not nice. Authoritative utterances like these often have no other foundation than a single personal experience.

Manufacturers and milliners have a little way of discovering new shades at intervals, but in this they arrogate to themselves something they have not. There are already "so many divers hues" in nature's art, that it is almost impossible to invent a new one. The heliotrope so much in vogue lately was just as fashionable a hundred years ago. In Hampton Court we see the Princess Royal of the day (George III.'s daughter) in a gown of the very shade worn now.

Next to the choice of colour the most difficult trial of taste is design. It would be a good thing if all women save such as had passed an examination in taste were forbidden aught save plain materials and neutral tints. The cloth is the site whereon "the beautified edifice of a Person" is to be built; and some women choose a loud check as instinctively as others "a robe of darkest grain." There are some who, like Mrs. Pullet, have a special weakness for a spot; and nothing less than a very large floral design will suffice for other ambitions.

Small patterns are always the safest. Does the Princess of Wales ever look better than in a dark blue foulard or sateen, starred with minute white dots? There is a reticence, a modesty about a tiny

design that even adds to distinction. "Ambulatory draughtboards" should be shunned by all; it is only one woman in a hundred who can wear them with impunity, and she is the very last to think of doing so.

Floral designs come and go, and are sometimes a pleasure, and sometimes a libel. Geometric designs never seem a great success; and Japanese and Chinese patterns are, as a rule, too *bizarre* for us quiet Occidentals. Only in tea-gowns and morning-gowns can they be freely indulged in.

There is one mediæval device, that, so far as I know, has not been revived—that is, for a woman to have her heraldic insignia woven as a pattern into her gown. Here, at least, is a pattern that a gentlewoman could have entirely for her own!

Concerning materials, few general rules can be laid down, because fashion so fluctuates, but this at least a gentlewoman may do—encourage home industries. There have been movements in favour of this, but none general, none enthusiastic, none persistent enough. If they were more widespread and more faithfully carried out, a great deal of good might result, and some of the misery caused by too much population and too little work be done away with.

There was never a better sovereign in this respect than Henry VIII. In his reign linen was largely imported, and so he ordained that out of every six acres a quarter of an acre should be put down in flax and hemp. Irish linen, Irish crochet, and Scotch and Irish tweeds are all high in favour just now, but English silks have not yet wholly made their way. Every year, however, our manufacturers are producing finer designs, lovelier tones, and more beautiful qualities than before, and some of the brocades that issue from Spitalfields rival in exquisite taste the finest fabrics of the past. One such I saw last winter. The ground was of the pearliest grey, just the shade of mother-of-pearl in one of its soberer moments, and there was a faint lattice-work of a lighter shade. Across this sprayed delicate half-blown roses with tender green leaves and slender stalks. The whole seemed like a gentle reflection from a garden of the past.

But who can strongly enough condemn the straight strings of abominably conventional roses laid adown some silks? Colour and design are alike false, unreal, and cruel. Some one surely must buy them, else they would not be made, and made in such costly materials too.

Messrs. Liberty have shown more public spirit

than any in encouraging home manufactories. Some of their most beautiful fabrics are made on English looms, and their periodic exhibitions of English-made goods are interesting and useful in showing what good work the British mills can do.

It is strange how France to-day holds the place that Italy did three hundred years ago. Italy was then the headquarters of art, literature, and dress (the three seem always to go together). To-day Paris queens it in these three realms. Italy is, however, waking to a sense of her loss, and is making some efforts to regain her footing. Venetian and Florentine silks never have been wholly abandoned, but Como is now the chief seat of the silk industry. The first loom was put up in 1500, and in 1554 the citizens gave Pagano Marno a premium to encourage the trade. In 1795 there were 1,333 looms, but to-day there are 8,000 hand and 2,000 power looms. The trade, notwithstanding, struggles under great disadvantages. It is only a short time since Italy was really free, and there is not much available capital in the country. In all Italy there are only 30,000 looms, but the silks are said to be equal in every way to those of Lyons.

Irish poplin, as a material, is worthy of more attention than it receives. The fancy for it fluctuates

too much, but there are few materials more durable and reliable. True, it lacks the charming *sheen* of silk and satin, and the rich softness of velvet; but a gentlewoman not too richly endowed with filthy lucre will find it more profitable than any of these.

Another singularly durable fabric is *moreen*. For a long time before last year no one ever heard of it, but now moreen petticoats are the fashion, and a moreen petticoat will last a lifetime. The material is made in Cheshire, and is, although it doesn't look like it, mostly cotton. The watered design is stamped on when the moreen is damp, and vanishes the first time the moreen is washed.

Cashmere used to be generally considered a highly "genteel" dress-stuff, but since it became cheap and nasty it has fallen into disrepute.

A material, in order to wear well, should be all wool; and there is a simple and easy test that any lady may apply herself. Let her take her patterns and dip them in any caustic, such as a solution of potash, and if they be half wool and half cotton the woolly surface will be burned off, and the cotton left bare.

The history of materials would be interesting had one time to go into it. Every country, animal, and

vegetable yields, in turn, its tribute to the world of clothes. Crêpe originated in Italy; cashmere in India, being made originally from the downy wool found at the roots of the long hair of the Thibetan goat; alpaca, llama, and vicuna, all take their names from South American sheep, and mohair comes from the Angora goat.

One little bit of recent enterprise may be noted. The Irish Industries Association has started the manufacture of Torchon lace in Ireland. It is simply made, and easily learned, and for effect and wear is quite unequalled as a trimming for underclothing.

There is something so graceful and picturesque about lace-making that it is astonishing it is not taken up more as fancy-work. Surely the lace pillow, the flying bobbins, and the charming results are infinitely superior to the inartistic crudities of crewel-work, for instance. And where can we find language to set forth the enormities of imitation lace? Nottingham has much to answer for. The middle class knows no lace but the imitations; and in no manufacture is lack of taste and love of shoddy displayed more loudly. Better no lace at all than horrors such as these. A gentlewoman should prize her lace, repair its first blemish, and,

if she have not a trustworthy laundress, learn to wash and dress it herself. It is an easy, pleasant task to cleanse the lovely fabric, and to the joy of possession will be added then the greater one of preservation.

CHAPTER IV.

DRESS AT HOME.

GOOD dressing, like charity, should begin at home. Hitherto I have insisted strongly on the necessity of beauty, but now I come to a part where beauty should be strongly tempered with comfort. We shall revert at once to the innermost sanctuaries of home, and consider the gentlewoman in her choice of underclothing.

Her undergarments should be her chiefest care, and, whatever she may afford for outside wear, the material next her skin should be pure and good. Wool is the safest thing for everybody in winter, and there is nothing to equal Jaeger's; it is the finest and the softest. The "natural" coloured wool is, however—like many other virtuous things—distinctly unattractive. Why should there not be an æsthetic league, the members of which might consult together to devise means to gild necessary but unlovely pills? A becoming (yet not unevan-

gelical) bonnet might be designed for the female warriors of the Salvation Army, the hideous shape of the hygienic boot would be sugared by its artistic adornment, and Jaeger alleviated by "cunning-simple," yet strictly sanitary, embroidery. Classes for instruction in the art of giving advice with graciousness and tact could be formed, and the ethics of beauty so insidiously propagated that even the hygienic woman would be won over at last.

Meanwhile Jaeger is doing his best, and is making charming underclothing of bleached wool of a pleasant creamy shade, trimmed with creamy woollen lace. Even he admits that these are not unnatural enough to poison; but it is strongly illustrative of the utilitarian spirit of the age that the grey garments are far more abundantly sold and worn. This is no doubt owing to the fact that the grey wash and wear better.

Next in virtue to the Jaeger fabric comes flannel, but there are many whose skins find it too irritating. Night-dresses of fine white tennis flannel, embroidered in delicate-coloured silks, are very becoming. They certainly do not last very long, but happy are they rich enough to despise this consideration! Some are of so thrifty a temperament that, although rich, they always seek after

the things that will last longest. This is a mistake. A woman who truly loves her kind will disregard durability, and revel in pretty things, knowing that by so doing she is giving her poor sisters work, and dispensing her wealth far more beneficially than by enervating charity. Women, as already said, would do well to seek out their own sempstresses, and give them their work and pay direct; any sewing bestowed through an agency means lower pay for the actual worker, to allow of a profit for the capitalist agent.

As to wearing wool in summer, that is a matter to be decided by the wearer's constitution and the weather. If it be a damp, unsettled season, or if the wearer have any weakness in throat or chest or lungs, wool is her only salvation; but a healthy person who feels the heat will not readily wear wool in summer. It clings too closely to the skin, and the hotter you get the closer it clings. You may wriggle, and you may writhe, but all in vain. "Stone walls do not a prison make" that can compare with wool. Therefore will the strong woman rebel, and revel in the coolness of iniquitous linen or cotton. Surely if one does one's duty nobly for two-thirds of the year in regard to animal fibre, one may have a holiday for the rest of the year!

There are many compromises between porous wool and impervious cotton for those who like to face both ways. The best are those cotton undergarments woven in one piece, in stockinette material. These are comfortable, elastic, and cool, and may be trimmed up very prettily with full frillings of Torchon or other laces. The "cellular" cloth has also many advocates, and looks deliciously airy for summer, but seems too well ventilated for winter. Its makers say its cellular tissue is similar to that of the skin, but that is absurd. We should be even more curious looking than we are were this the case. All our privacy would be gone at once. Our internal arrangements would be seen through our numerous portholes, and our physical defects be proclaimed to every one. And even if the "cellular" cloth be an "enlarged" portrait of our skin it is an insult. As it is, the skin has a deceitfully smooth and agreeable appearance, and no woman would care to be constantly reminded that it would lose all its beauty if seen through a magnifying glass.

And here I would say a word against that arrant impostor amongst materials—flannelette. Its pretty shades and soft texture have found it favour with many, but it is a delusion and a snare; its hypocrisy

is its worst fault, for it is but cotton in sheep's clothing, and those who wear it, and expect it to equal wool in warmth and durability, will rue their rash confidence bitterly, ere long. Its woolly surface and delicate tints soon disappear, and its last estate is as miserable as that of any other detected criminal.

The man who chose his wife to match his drawing-room curtains was a man of taste, and a gentlewoman should show her appreciation of home by dressing to suit it. At breakfast she should be fresh and dainty as the morn; a plentiful besprinkling of lace and ribbons well befits the early day. There is an exhilaration about the morning that naturally expresses itself in bright colours and dainty adornments. Be her morning dress as simple as it may, it should always possess this essential quality of freshness. It will put the whole breakfast-table in good humour, and react cheeringly on herself.

But as every woman has (or should have) certain household details to see to in the morning, so should her dress be workmanlike as well as fresh. Silk, velvet, plush, and such unprofitable fripperies had best be left for the leisured afternoon. A dainty morning-gown of wool or cotton, sufficiently loose

and easy for all possible activity, will harmonise best with the duties of the hour. A slight train is not amiss in the morning. It gives dignity in walking, and warmth to the feet in sitting.

A gentlewoman whose home is spacious and historic has the greatest liberty in house-dress. If all around her be traces of successive generations, she may, by many a pretty old-fashioned trick of dress, recall each in turn. If, on the other hand, her dwelling is a thoroughly modern one, let her not be too quaintly fanciful in her dress lest she put the newness of her home to shame. Those who, in the days of the æsthetic revival, gave way to peacocks' feathers, and draped everything in "art" serge, must almost, if they cannot afford to redecorate, continue to drape themselves to match. This is, indeed, the evil of following a fad in house-decoration. One positively *daren't* introduce an honest crimson into a sunflower and peacock drawing-room. Yet is there anything in drear November like a pretty crimson gown? It is homelike as a fire, cheering as sunshine.

There are two garments in particular whose very essence is eloquent of home—one, the apron, may be said to epitomise the past; the other, the tea-gown, the present.

In apron days the gentlewoman was her own housekeeper, her own nurse, and often her own cook. The stillroom was her pride and pleasure, and many cunning lotions did she concoct out of the herbs that grew in the neighbouring lanes. Therefore was the modest apron a useful, nay indispensable, part of her attire. Already in Saxon days they used it, calling it a "barm- (bosom) cloth"; and Chaucer speaks of

> "A barm-cloth as white as morrow milk
> Upon her lendes, full of many a gore."

But these days are over now. To not many women comes even the "thin slip of knotched silk," that Carlyle calls the "emblem and beatified ghost of the apron," remain. The fanciful morning-gown is so frequently renewed that no such "defence" for it is needed. The day when Beau Nash peremptorily tore off the apron in which the Duchess of Queensberry had come to the Bath Assembly was that on which women abandoned the last pretence of domesticity in dress, and became, instead of housekeepers, house-*decorators*. The Duchess accepted the admonition with that meekness which is a sign of a great mind. She responded only by a pleasant smile and a curtsey. Her apron was flung to the ladies' maids—and remained there.

But already in the days of the dandies the apron had lost its pristine meaning. It was about the end of the sixteenth century that it ceased to be the badge of the housewife, and became the decoration of the *mondaine*. There was considerable variety in apron modes. Massinger's "City Madam," in 1659, was told to tear off her green apron, as it was no longer the fashion. In 1753 it is recorded that flounced aprons were the newest thing. In one of Sir David Wilkie's pictures in the National Gallery, may be seen a very fair representation of the apron of his day. It is of white silk, richly embroidered, trimmed with a frill of lace, and garnished with rosettes of ribbon.

Not once but often did these too-fanciful aprons give occasion to the scoffer.

"Those aprons of white thrid,"

says one—

"So choicely tide, so dearly bought,
So finely fringed, so nicely spred,
So quaintlie cut, so richly wrought
Were they in worke to save their cotes,
They need not cost so many grotes."

But now we live in the age of the tea-gown. Domesticity was succeeded by the hypocrisy of the decorative apron; but now hypocrisy and decor

cast aside, we defy all rules, and lounge at ease the luxurious but comfortable tea-gown.

Even the tea-gown, however, is only a modern ival of the ancient sack. The sack was of nch device, and came first to England in arles II.'s time. In 1688 or 1689 Pepys records t "my wife this day put on her French gown, ed a sac, which becomes her very well." It ained, more or less, in fashion for a hundred rs, and some of the descriptions of the sacks last century might very well pass for those modern tea-gowns.

The Dowager Countess of Effingham in 1763 essed a brown satin sack richly brocaded in r; another was of blue-and-gold Turkey silk, a third of white satin, brocaded with yellow ers. The *Lady's Magazine* of the day described a "genteel undress," and such it has remained since.

t requires considerable discretion to hit the *in between* trimness and ease in a tea-gown. o err in being too much like dressing-gowns, a temporary reaction some time ago made them like other gowns. A tea-gown is best close-ng, and trained behind, but loosely draped in t. The lines of the back prevent the garment

being altogether shapeless, and the fulness
front ensures comfort. The quainter the sleev
the looser and more artistic the neck, the better.

A lady on her day at home should not err by
much magnificence. There are few whose acqnai
ances are all amongst the rich and prospero
The "poor relation" is an unfortunate institut
Consideration for her guests should be stronger v
her than the desire to display the radiance of s
Parisian *confection*; and it is a good old-fashio
rule that a hostess should outshine none of
guests. In the houses of her friends she may
them honour by the splendour and brilliancy
her raiment; but at home her dress should be qu
and have nothing so unduly rich about it a
make the most modestly attired caller feel il
ease.

For home dinner-gowns the tea-gown is perfec
in winter; but care must be taken not to overdo
use of it, else there will be a reaction in favou
the comfortless primness of our grandmothers.
is a mistake to wear up a soiled ball-dress for h
dinners. A pretty fresh, if inexpensive, gow
far better than faded and tawdry magnificenc

In fact, the gentlewoman should be, if anyth
daintier at home than abroad. Unless she

one there must be some whose eyes she will wish gladden. A wife who is always charming in her ss and manner, even in a *tête-à-tête*, need never arrel about supremacy. What father can resist e wishes of a prettily attired daughter? And en brothers, although, as a rule, the knottiest sculine problem an ingenious woman has to estle with, have been known to yield to the oft solicitudes of dress."

CHAPTER V.

DRESS IN THE COUNTRY.

DRESS in the country is much more conting on the weather than dress in the town. F those who deem it essential to health to maintai daily constitutional in the muddiest and wettest weather, at least one short-skirted dress of hon trustworthy tweed is necessary. The best plan to have the skirt lined either with mackintosh leather. If with leather the dress may be bo with it, and this is an advantage, as the outs of a dress often gets as muddy as the ins Leather is, moreover, decorative as well as ut tarian, and a russet-hued dress bound with d yellow leather is pleasing to behold, as well rational to wear. A tweed waterproof coat is al advisable,—a cloak blows about too much to useful on unsheltered country roads. Both dr and coat should be five inches off the ground ensure comfort, and gaiters may be worn to clot

d keep warm the ankles. With these, a small
lt hat, and a pair of good Jaeger boots, the
ughest weather may be defied. There is no
ore valuable aid to a fresh complexion than a
risk walk on a damp windy day.

When the country is white with snow, the
ntlewoman cannot do better than follow the
xample of the merry robins, and don a crimson
own. Nothing looks brighter or better on a
hite landscape than a bit of honest red; but
ould red fail to please or to become, yellow or
ange may take its place. Each serves as a re-
inder of the absent sunshine, and gives a fictitious
ightness to the scene.

It is not well to be too "æsthetic" in one's
louring when the year is dying. The colour
s all fled from hedgerow and lawn, and you
ne can atone for its absence; therefore dally
with half-tones, avoid all moribund shades,
d gown yourself as brightly as you can.

When spring comes, and the unabashed snow-
op, the violets dim, and the "rathe primrose"
ep forth into the bare brown world, aid and
et them as best you can, and lighten your
lours as the year advances. But when spring
blossomed into summer, and "

are green," and the land is bright with flowe
remember that discretion is the better part
valour, and retire from the contest ere defeat
yours. When Nature hath put on her comple
adornment she shows so many hues that 'tis us
less to compete against them. Far wiser is it
subside at once into neutral shades. Let them
as delicate and fresh as possible—white, crea
grey, or apricot. If you venture on pinks, let the
be pale as the innermost edge of a rose-leaf;
on blues, let them incline strongly to grey. T
delicious blue-grey, common amongst French a
German peasants, is admirable. There is one brig
colour you may have, and that is a certain sha
of green, like that of the first leaves of the popl
that come before the swallow dares. It is a gr
which looks as if it had caught all the sunshi
and had hoarded it up to make its wearer se
brighter.

Modishness is out of place in the country. "T
fashions of the garments of heaven and earth e
dureth for ever," and their perennial loveliness pu
to shame our petty seekings after novelty. B
Liberty gowns are always suitable. They
comfortable to wear, delightful to look at, a
quaint devices are of a piece wit

loveliness of the flowers. They are neither in nor out of the fashion, but a "joy for ever." The fabrics have, moreover, just the elasticity and softness required for lounging about a garden in. You may sit as you please, and they will not crush or go out of order. White washing dresses are also excellent; their freshness is renewed so easily.

In the country, more than elsewhere, one should try to be unhampered by one's clothes. They should be free and easy; strong enough to withstand the long blackberry trailers that stray across the paths; fresh and light, to match the sunshine and gaiety of nature; simple in design and material, for the gauds of Town are out of place by mead and stream.

Those who love to do a little gardening should have a special costume for it. A plain, neat, light woollen dress, short in the skirt, loose and easy in sleeves and bodice, is the best. Looseness need not be synonymous with untidiness. There are many quaint revivals of old fashions that combine ease with beauty. A set of gardening aprons will help to ward off the inevitable dirt associated with the work, and these, though large and strong, need not be too suggestive of the kitchen. An apron such as I mean I saw in Germany. It was of plain

holland, with graduated bars of Turkey red across the foot of it. White cross-stitch, in a prim antique design, showed upon the red stuff, and red cross-stitch upon the white. A broad band of strong linen lace insertion lightened it a little, and red ribbons tied at one side, and curled up into rosettes to retain the bib at the shoulders, further enlivened it. Another useful and pretty apron, made of loose-textured holland, might be modelled on the Roman scarf. The material could be ravelled out into a fringe at the foot, and bars of thin washing silk in various delicate "art" shades put across it. The other end of the scarf could be turned over from the waist, and a gay cord knotted at the side hold it together. Strong boots should of course be worn, but they may be neat as well as strong. Loose chamois gloves, and a shady hat, with a Liberty sash knotted round it, would complete the costume. Really the best and most becoming headgear for gardening is the sun-bonnet, and very bewitching it may be made. Arrayed as above, the gentlewoman is workmanlike, yet fair to see, and may spend a pleasant morning amongst her roses, undisturbed either by the fear of spoiling her clothes, or, by that more bitter dread, of being caught by a too-early caller in unseemly garments.

Cycling, although now somewhat old-fashioned, has still its devotees; and some there are who still prefer toiling at the wheel to sauntering at ease.

Tricycling is the only thing a woman does that really seems to require trousers. The skirt and the cycle were not made for each other; they have a way of getting mixed that is very trying. The time is not yet ripe for discarding the petticoats, however, and still "'there's a decency required,' quoth she." The best compromise is to have but one skirt, and that as judiciously cut as possible, and beneath it a pair of business-like knickerbockers. As long as a woman hides her breeches she may defy criticism. A singular feature of the tricycling woman is her utter lack of the æsthetic sense:—note her silent scorn of the beauties of Nature as she whirls through them! Her sole ideas are to keep her skirt down, and try to go as fast as a man. And did any one ever see her choose a pretty material for her cycling dress? The cycling man is of course wedded to grey, but the male biped is singularly sad and sombre in his taste. Beauty has long since fled from his apparel, but it still hovers in attendance on all hospitable women. Those who neglect on any occasion to entertain it are apt to let it slip through their

fingers for ever. It may be that the tricycling woman chooses ugly tweeds because she thinks them mannish; but she forgets that ugliness is not the sole attribute of mankind.

For camping-out an excellent thing is the rubber skirt, or one made of tweed and lined with mackintosh. It is not pretty, but it is the only foeman worthy of the steel of rheumatism—the insidious foe, that lies in waiting for the camper-out. In such a skirt you can sit on grass, and even *damp* grass, and escape unscathed. Guarded by goloshes and waterproofs, camping-out has at least the negative merit of being not dangerous. Before it can be classified as a pleasure, however, it will be necessary to put the present clerk of the weather out of office, and try what new management can do.

Dressing for a picnic is difficult. One's destination is, as a rule, picturesque, but dirty! and the task of combining archæological sentiment, festal gaiety, and superiority to dirt all in one costume is no easy one. Perhaps the safest thing is again a Liberty gown, soberly bright in colour—say terra-cotta or sage-green. The heart naturally inclines to white for such festivities, but the spotlessness of a white gown will rarely remain intact through-

out a whole picnic day, and a woman of taste will prefer being moderately well dressed all day to being 'gay in the morning and having all her splendour soiled and dim by night. Best keep the pretty white gowns for the ordered gaiety of a garden party. There you may be as festive and as Parisian as you please. Your *confections* must, however, simulate simplicity if they have it not. It is not so necessary to conceal art in Town;—there, a little complexity is agreeable. The surroundings are too uninteresting to distract, and the mind welcomes the gentle speculation and wonder caused by the subtleties of novel combinations.

But in the country Herrick's advice is best,—

"Rise, and put on your foliage, and be seen
To come forth, like the spring-time, fresh and green,
And sweet as Flora. Take no care
For jewels for your gown or hair;
Fear not, the leaves will strew
Gems in abundance upon you;
Besides, the childhood of the day has kept,
Against you come, some orient pearls unwept."

Dress for tennis, riding, and shooting is already well-arranged and understood; and as for golf, all the variety that comfort requires is to have the skirt a trifle shorter, and the sleeves and bodice

a thought looser than usual to ensure freedom of stroke.

Yet there is a romance about golf that might well express itself in dress. Its natural home is on moorlands or by wild sea-shores; and half its charm, in Scotland at least, is its environment. Ladies' golf in St. Andrews is, indeed, but a charming pretext. It gives one a reasonable excuse for lingering about the fresh breezy links, and revelling in the strong salt air. Pleasant is it, towards evening, to knock the balls round in the intervals of watching the brilliance of the sunsets, and of noting how the shallow pools in the long, low sands catch and retain the red light, until they gleam like jewels across the sombre shore. Weirdly strange, too, looks the broken fragment of the cathedral tower in the mystic light; and in these surroundings, at least, modernity of dress becomes unseemly and distasteful.

Those who go north in autumn must choose their dress with care. Muslins, delaines, chiffons, are out of place on Highland hills. The strong, pure air is chilly, if invigorating, and woollen materials are the best protection. Those who would climb hills should have one skirt, at least, modelled on the "Eilitto," with no foundation, and

made in broad box pleats mounted on elastic, so as to seem, when the wearer is not in motion, like a plain gored skirt; yet able, during the climb, to give readily to the longest stride. Strong boots are also necessary, for the hills of Thule are treacherous and boggy.

The materials of the country are those that best befit it, and it is a delicate compliment to a place to patronise its manufacture. Harris tweed is a genuine Hebridean product. It is actually made by the women of the island, who tease, card, dye, and spin the wool, and even weave it. There is a hand-loom in nearly every cottage. The work is too slow and laborious to be very profitable; but still, in the present unsatisfactory state of affairs in these outer islands, it is always something, and great credit is due to those who, by means of the Scottish Home Industries Association, have fostered the manufacture. It was the late Countess of Rosebery who, in 1889, originated the Society; but it was the deceased Countess of Dunmore and Mrs. Beckett who had a special care over Harris. Very nice home-spun tweed is also made in Sutherland and Ross. These peasant manufacturers are skilled in the use of local vegetable dyes. The curious lichen, the bark of the alder,

the "bonny, bonny broom," the rough and sturdy bog-myrtle, and the heather, with its "purple, deep as the dawn," are all pressed into service.

Tartan is not amiss on a hillside; like bagpipes, it shows to most advantage on its native heath. A chequered hat-ribbon or jacket lining is an appropriate enlivenment for a costume of good Scotch tweed. Englishwomen should, however, be chary about assuming one of the historic tartans unless their blood entitle them to it. It is, indeed, a fabric that looks a little out of place upon a pretty southerner. There is a barbaric brightness about it that suits best with the uncivilised fervour which lurks beneath the outward cautiousness and reserve of the genuine Scot.

In arranging one's dress for the seaside, care should be taken to select colours that will withstand the sea air. Waterside-dress had also best be made as trimly as possible, for a sea-breeze is very ruffling, and disorder is not always sweet. Pink is an admirable colour for the seaside. It withstands the salt in the air better than most, and contrasts agreeably with the cold fresh greys and blues of sea and sky. Nature is here again our guide. Commonest of all coast flowers is the little sea-pink. It has just enough blue

to declare its sympathy with the water, and just enough pink to be in pleasant opposition to it.

As for yachting dress, that has not varied much of late years. Blue serge and anchors are its principal ingredients. Why is not grey serge more worn? It stands the sea-water better than blue, and looks fresher and brighter on a sunny day. With a little gold trimming to brighten it, it is "mighty pretty," as Mr. Pepys would say. Does the inevitable and too-abundant anchor not betray a lack of invention on the part of British dress-makers? It is not even appropriate. An anchor is the emblem of rest and establishment. It is suitable enough at Cowes, but who would go a-rowing on the sea with an anchor as her sign-board? It becomes at times positively irritating. Those who go a-yachting should not forget to provide themselves with a large warm picturesque cloak to wrap up in at night. Let it have a hood lined with some soft becoming fur, and let it be a real hood that will draw over the head, and then may moonlight flirtations be an unmixed pleasure, unalloyed by any afterthought of neuralgia.

And here seems the most fitting place to insert a few words of entreaty to women who travel abroad. Let their "travel appear rather in their

discourse than their apparel." The Englishwoman abroad is a favourite object of derision amongst foreigners. Matters are improving, and the number of unattractive females in gauze veils, chamois gloves, and ill-made tweeds is considerably smaller, but the race is not yet extinct. Some women never take time when travelling to dress their hair properly, and their elfin locks are at the mercy of every wind that blows. Such women are a discredit to their country, and nothing would help more to maintain our status abroad than for all who venture over the Channel to be as spick-and-span as they are at home. Orders should be given to the custom-houses to confiscate all unnecessary and unbecoming portions of the travelling-dress, such as the veil and gloves above referred to.

For all kinds of country wear a hat is a difficult item. One plain useful felt is almost necessary, and picturesque open-work straws are delicious in summer. These frequently suffer from a too liberal garniture of flowers. The decision with which some women announce harvest by putting poppies of a relentless, unshaded red, and corn extravagantly bristled and of appalling stiffness, in their hats, is enough to keep the very wheat from ripening. Artificial roses show their innate good sense by

fading to a shamed pallor when exposed to the sun and the rivalry of the royal original. Primroses are equally abashed, and it is cruel to sport the modest violet in such masses ere the gentle hedgling ventures forth itself. Puffings of lace, net, chiffon, or gauze, look best on country hats. They are light and summerlike, and yet do not invite comparison, sure to be unfavourable.

Not every one who goes to Scotland should wear a Tam-o'-Shanter. It is only by skilful management that this trying woollen monstrosity is ever rendered becoming, and, unless she have genius in her finger-tips, the gentlewoman had best leave it alone. Even when put on so as to look pretty, it doesn't always remain so. It has a disconcerting way of lurching over just at the wrong time.

Poverty has no greater grief than the necessity it entails of "wearing up" one's clothes. The beginning of a gown is a delight; its continuance, if it is becoming, endurable; but its decay is bitterness indeed. Some women consider the country an excellent place for "wearing up" garments no longer fresh; but when the country decks itself so brightly for you the best you can do is to return the compliment. If you cannot afford to discard soiled gowns, adopt one of two plans—either get

plain dark dresses, thoroughly good in material and make, that will not show their age; or, if you weary of this, and long for brighter raiment, let your dresses be not so expensive but that you can afford to renew them. There are hundreds of cheap yet tasteful materials now, and a gentlewoman who can make her own dresses may keep her wardrobe as varied and dainty as that of her richer friends.

CHAPTER VI.

DRESS IN TOWN.

ALTHOUGH at home or in the country we may oppose, in a measure, the tyranny of Fashion, in Town it is different. Bond Street and Regent Street are her temples, where her priestesses minister to her night and day; and to live within her sacred courts and still defy her, is more than one can expect from the gallantest woman alive.

Is there anything quite so wonderful as a fashionable dressmaker? Baudelaire says that the dandy ought to be sublime without interruption, and the very enunciation of the maxim betrays the need of it. What the dandy ought to be, the dressmaker is. Her tender, pitying superiority is quite unique in its way. She puts a mantle on your shoulders with condescension, and accepts your order as her rightful tribute. She smiles benignly on you when she has beguiled you, and ignores you with placid *hauteur* when you dare to differ from her. To her

Fashion is a god, and she is its prophet. As one high in the employ of the sovereign, she can afford to look down with compassion upon humbler worshippers. Not even the Delphic oracle was more sphinx-like concerning the future than she. You feel at once that the secrets of the gods are hers, but that she is too high-minded ever to disclose them. Occasionally, as if by chance, she lets drop a pearl. "So-and-so will be worn this winter." You listen in reverent silence, not presuming to mention that you ever heard the decree before.

For morning wear in Town the tailor-made gown is safest and best. The dressmaker may suffice for the country, but what is Town without the tailor? The tailor-made gown is not a novelty. Early in the century it was worn, but within the last few years it has attained to a greater popularity than ever before. Redfern dates from 1826, but at first he confined himself to yachting garments. He did not come to Town till 1878, but since then his beautiful cut has done much to increase the popularity of tailor-made garments. It is curiously illustrative of the unexpected inefficiencies of women, that even in dress the greatest successes have been achieved by the aid of men. Not that the actual work of a Redfern gown is solely done

by men. Their shooting and fishing gowns are entirely made by tailors, but the secret of their success is an artful division of labour. The women do the fitting, and the making is apportioned between men and women tailors.

But although a tailor-made gown will give grace and distinction to many women who have it not, there are others whom nothing suits less. Yet these are the very women whom no other will content!

> "All women born are so perverse,
> From Adam's wife, that proved a curse,
> Though God had made her for a blessing";

and to this perversity is, no doubt, due much of that melancholy which Elia has pronounced to be characteristic of tailors. Lamb attributes it to a different cause. He says: "May it not be that the custom of wearing apparel being derived to us from the Fall, and one of the most mortifying products of that unhappy event, a certain seriousness (to say no more of it) may, in the order of things, have been intended to be impressed on the minds of that race of men to whom, in all ages, the care of contriving the human apparel has been entrusted?" But here, I fancy, Lamb has been more fanciful than accurate. Tailors would have been

much more mortified had the interesting development of clothes above referred to never occurred.

If out-of-doors in Town, a certain restrained richness is most effective. Mantles, whose decorations in the way of *passementerie*, velvet, or galon assert themselves too loudly, are not in taste. The witty M. Le Blanc says : "Il est de bon goût que la partie du vêtement la plus riche soit celle que l'on montre le moins." Yet as one does not care wholly to conceal one's merits, a certain compromise may be effected. The plain, well-cut mantle should have a rich lining, which the judicious breeze will not fail to expose at times. Soft, but not heavy, fur in winter, and bright silk in summer, are suitable for this purpose. The dress, though plain, should be as good in cut and material as the purse will permit. Those whose wardrobes are but scantily furnished should see that they contain nothing so *outré* that its constant recurrence will attract notice. It is a trifle monotonous always to wear the same gown, and that a quiet one, for women delight in variety ; but if poverty limits the larger garments, ingenuity will devise many ways of varying them by means of accessories. "True taste," said Rogers, "is an excellent economist ; she delights in producing great effects by small means." Bad taste has been

defined as "le plaisir aristocratique de déplaire"; but this must be but a snobbish aristocracy, to which none who delight in the beautiful would care to belong.

Dress in Town has its difficulties; for the majority of women wish, first of all, to do justice to their own charms; next, to surpass their friends; and thirdly, to attract and retain attention. The ethical enthusiast will scorn these aims; but nevertheless they are real ones, and the natural result of the law that decrees the survival of the fittest. Moreover, a certain vein of frivolity is an essential in the composition of a really charming woman. The woman who disregards her sex, her clothes, and her appearance is the dullest creature out; it is the delightfully inconsequent mixture of fine emotion and distracting triviality that makes woman "a mystery and a bewilderment" to man. A woman always takes herself seriously, yet never seems serious. Howells, in one of his very occasional moments of inspiration, writes of one of his heroes—"Women of fashion always interested him; he liked them. It diverted him that they should take themselves so seriously. Their resolution, their suffering for their ideal, such as it was, their energy in dressing and

adorning themselves, the pains they were at to achieve the trivialities they passed their lives in, were perpetually delightful to him. He often found them people of great simplicity, and sometimes of singular good sense; their frequent vein of piety was delicious."

And this brings one to the consideration of dress for church. Church-going is considerably adulterated by the Prayer Book parade that follows; just as the theatre, in the eyes of the "unco guid," suffers from the contamination of the vices that surround it. A woman to whom the service is but a prelude to the promenade, will naturally bedeck herself in her choicest *confections*, and be uncomfortable all church time lest she crush her new gown, or displace or disorder her *coiffure*. The average pew, as a rule, betrays a singular lack of consideration for the creations of the *modiste*. The woman of the truest taste, however, will adopt a different plan. Church-going has fallen a little into disrepute, but reverence is a thing that can never go out of date; and those in whom the "vein of piety" is absent will, at least, have consideration for the feeling of others, and be Puritanically quiet and sober in their garments.

How out of place the extravagant modishness of the *mondaine* seems in a place like Westminster

Abbey! The richness of memory and sentiment all around put to shame the audacious fripperies of the moment. In Town, an opportunity such as this for tasteful simplicity should be welcomed, for, very often, simplicity is out of place. On the Row a gentlewoman must be at all points *sans reproche* At Ascot she must be in the height of the present fashion, if she cannot succeed in heralding a new one. Only "on the river old and grey" is quaintness and fancifulness allowable, and there russet hues are best. A golden-brown serge skirt, a golden silk blouse, and a hat with dark and light brown on it, and perhaps a bunch of fruit—crimson or purple—will be charming. Terra-cotta blends well with the green of the trees, but avoid chilling blues and misty greys. Be the flowers of the river landscape; be gay, but not too gay.

Even the modishness of Town has its picturesque moments, and there is a poetry of Town as distinct from that of the country as a street dress should be from a garden one. Austin Dobson and others have given us many a dainty little picture of Town life.

"I intended an ode—
But Rose crossed the road
In her latest new bonnet—
I intended an ode,
And it turned to a sonnet."

Here is another—

"Upon the kerb a maiden neat—
Her hazel eyes are passing sweet—
There stands and waits in dire distress.
The muddy road is pitiless,
And 'buses thunder down the street.

"A snowy skirt, all frills and pleat,
Two tiny, well-shod, dainty feet
Peep out, beneath her kilted dress,
Upon the kerb.

"She'll first advance and then retreat,
Half frightened by a hansom fleet;
She looks around, I must confess,
With marvellous coquettishness!
Then droops her eyes and looks discreet
Upon the kerb!"

The country has this advantage over the town—that in bad weather, as in good weather, it has picturesque possibilities. The town woman, in bad weather, is sadly hampered by conventionality. The timidest woman will venture on the convenient short skirt in the country, but none so bold as to display her ankles in town. Valiant have been the efforts made to introduce reform in this, but woman remains true to her primary instincts, and defies reason. Her case on wet days is very 'piteous. Hampered by a waterproof, a parcel, and a long skirt, she is a heroic but unlovely martyr to con-

ventionality. Her greatest difficulty is her pocket. Dressmakers take a weird delight in concealing it, and you have to search for it as long and fruitlessly as for hidden treasure. The indiscreet person who, without first extracting her purse, hires a hansom, writhes about it inside in search of her pocket, whilst the "astral body" of the dressmaker hovers near, and almost betrays itself by its malevolent chuckle of delight. It is through the pocket that the dressmaker repays (and with interest) all the annoyance her customer causes her; and it is the knowledge of this last worst weapon that enables her to maintain that stoic calm during fault-finding which has led to the belief that dressmakers are not made of flesh and blood like other people, but of whalebone and wadding, and worked on automatic principles—put a cheque in the slot, pull the drawer, wait some time, and you receive a dress. Sometimes the machine is out of gear, it doesn't work, and the wrong sort of dress comes home; but vituperation and entreaty are alike useless; it is only an automaton, and you must not expect too much from it.

One of the happiest features of Bellamy's ideal town was the arrangement by which the streets were sheltered by awnings in wet weather. To

expect awnings everywhere is useless; but why do not some of those women, so full of superfluous energy that they are reduced to providing "homes of rest" for elderly and decrepit horses, and dressing dolls for the inappreciative heathen, try instead to induce the County Council to provide rain-shelters for Regent and Bond Streets, so that the irrepressible shopper may pursue her favourite avocation with comfort in wet as well as in dry weather?

CHAPTER VII.

CONCERNING MAGNIFICENCE.

ALTHOUGH for every-day wear simplicity is the first element of good taste, yet there is in human nature a latent love of splendour. We are a little ashamed of it nowadays, and sadden and sober our garb on all possible occasions; but there are times and seasons when the love of magnificence will assert itself. Brilliance of colour, richness of texture are indeed good and admirable things, and not only the artist's eyes are gladdened by their beauty. Colour and design are the foundation of all art; and the man or woman to whom these are not dear will never paint a picture worth looking at, sing a song worth listening to, or write verse that will live. Herein lies the duty of magnificence. Its function is to gladden and inspire, and the rich who can display it should do so on all fitting occasions as royally as they can.

To wear rich fabrics is also good, inasmuch as it

encourages the finer manufactures; and to deck oneself with rare embroidery is to give pleasant and artistic work to many who must earn their living, and would fain do it as agreeably as possible. Jewellery in itself is one of the minor arts. Care should be taken that your materials be thoroughly artistic as well as rich; that your embroidery be worthy in design as well as in execution; that your gems be cut with a judicious restraint, and set with a noble simplicity that will not mock—as too many settings do—their beauty.

Ruskin's political economy is a trifle extraordinary. He tells girls it is good to encourage trade, and give orders for beautiful dresses; but he tells them also to clothe not only themselves with them, but also all around. It sounds very pretty, but it is very absurd. Magnificence is not, and never can be, for the many; and to try and induce honest working women to deck themselves in artistic dresses is folly. The best a gentlewoman can do is to set an example of simplicity in her outdoor apparel, and to abstain from giving her soiled smart gowns to her maid. Her maid will know better than to wear them herself, but will be ready enough to sell them to some cast-off clothes agent; and she, in her turn, will dispose of them to an indiscriminating

'Arriet, who, by wearing them, will become the envy and distraction of her neighbours. The gentlewoman, in her thoughtlessness, is thus responsible for much of thet awdry finery we deprecate in the working classes to-day. To give or sell a good plain woollen gown is right enough, but the gayer attire should be otherwise disposed of; and here is an opening for thrifty and indigent gentlewomen. In these soiled gowns there is often left a bit of silk, a stretch of embroidery, worthy of being utilised by skilful fingers. Dolls might be dressed, pincushions made, and so on, out of these discarded fragments.

Another harmful thing about Ruskin's plan, of giving away beautiful clothes to those who have not earned them, is, that it takes away a much-needed stimulus to exertion. The love of beauty is one of the best inspirations to honest, continuous work, and if people found they could gratify it otherwise, the natural indolence of mankind would reassert itself. Ruskin's advice is enervating in the extreme; and when he declares it better to spend £14,000 on a Paul Veronese than on ball-dresses, he shows himself as indifferent to the welfare of his fellow-creatures as many who never profess to consider them at all. Parliament is not an

æsthetic assembly; and its first duty is to encourage trade that men may live: and nothing encourages manufacture more than the wearing of fine clothes. Montesquieu says that when a woman orders a dress "cinquante artisans ne dorment plus, et n'aient plus le loisir de boire et de manger." No doubt they are perfectly willing to postpone, as long as possible, these somewhat pressing duties for the sake of the profit the extra work will bring them. The train that the Empress of Russia wore at her coronation was so elaborate, that girls had to work night and day for six weeks to complete it in time. It was embroidered in silver, cost £1,000, and is to be preserved as a State curiosity.

Cup-day at Ascot, a Royal opera night, a ball in the season, a fashionable marriage, and a Court presentation, are now almost the only occasions at which real magnificence is permissible.

At Ascot the gentlewoman's attire should be rich and brilliant, but not too diaphanous in texture. Ascot is a lottery. The sun may shine, and the finest and airiest fabrics seem as appropriate as a butterfly's wings; but, alas! the sun may *not* shine, and drenched and bedraggled splendour, trying to look happy under an umbrella on the

top of a drag, is a pitiful sight. She of the grand stand may fare better; but even under shelter transparent elegance scarce looks seemly when the rain is falling.

At the opera on a Royal night you may be as splendid as you please. The glitter of jewels fits well with the artificial splendour of a theatre. It is only since 1811 that the opera has been an occasion for great toilets; therefore it is a comparatively modern institution.

At a marriage it is the natural instinct of a bride to deck herself in all her jewels; but there are those so sentimental that to them the glitter of diamonds on this occasion seems garish and unsuitable.

The dance demands of her votaries a fitting lightness of colour and texture, and in the ball-room the airier you are the better. At the Drawing Room you cannot be too resplendent. The richer your brocade, the more fitting the occasion. Yet let your richness be in taste, and have your design as good as your material; for it is a shame to allow stiff, unreal flowers and meretricious commonplaces to express themselves in the richest silk and velvet.

Next to choosing a beautiful robe, the most difficult thing is to wear it. Madame de Girardin

says, "Il n'y a qu'un moyen de porter une belle robe —c'est de l'oublier"; but this seems to me too strong a self-sacrifice for any woman to make. A beautiful dress is a pleasure to its wearer, and to bid her forget it is to destroy her happiness. Rather let the gentlewoman be so much at home and at ease in her splendid gown that delight may have the same effect as forgetfulness.

But it is in the perfection of her accessories that a lady has the best chance of expressing her taste. These should be rather superior than inferior to her dress. Gloves, shoes, stockings, fan, jewels, and handkerchief should all be in perfect harmony with her gown and with each other.

Gloves, although they have gained in beauty of shape and material, are no longer the wonderfully decorative things they once were. With the last-century coat bodice or jacket, a richly gauntleted glove, such as was worn long ago, would have been well in keeping. The trimness of the modern glove seemed a little out of place beside the ancient grace of the lace cravat and embroidered flap pocket. Exceedingly beautiful was the mediæval glove, with its garniture in gold thread, its fine designs in seed pearls; and very pretty would a revival of this bygone mode be.

Obtrusively embroidered and elaborated designs on stockings cannot be commended. If the foot and ankle be pretty, it is not for the wearer to call attention to it; whilst if, as is more commonly the case, the ankle be characterised rather by quantity than quality, concealment then becomes an object. Nothing is prettier than a plain silk stocking; and an open-work design in front, unmarred by any additional colour, is the only variation that can be admired.

The same rule holds good in slippers. Anything that invites attention is bad taste. It is only at their first balls that Cinderellas are indiscreet enough to wear glass slippers. An exception may be made with regard to old-fashioned paste buckles. These with the recent long straight Empire gowns were almost essential, and their historic significance merits the attention it attracts.

There is something "very coquet and charming" about the fan. In itself often a work of art, it is, by turns, the weapon of coquetry, the shelter of modesty, and the flutter of pride. To wave it with deftness and meaning, to cool oneself with grace, and to fill the interludes of conversation with dexterous manipulation of it, are no mean accomplishments. Madame de Stael says: "Supposons une

femme délicieusement aimable, magnifiquement parée, pétrie de grace ; si avec tous ces avantages elle ne sais que bourgeoisement manier l'éventail, elle aura toujours à craindre de se voir l'objet de ridicule."

Innumerable are the dainty verses that celebrate the fan.

"Chicken-skin, delicate, white,
Painted by Carlo Vanloo,
Tones in a riot of light,
Roses, and vaporous blue.
Hark to the dainty *frou-frou*!
Picture above, if you can,
Eyes that could melt as the dew,
This was the Pompadour's fan!"[1]

And again—

"A flirted fan of blade of gold
Is wondrous winsome to behold:
It seems an armoured shard to bear,
The Emperor—Scarab—strange and rare,
Metallic, lustrous, jewel-cold.

"Fawning and fluttering, fold on fold
And scale on scale, its charm unrolled,
Lures, dazzles, slays. It thrills the air,
A flirted fan!"

But the fantasy of dress attains its apotheosis in jewels. A garniture of gems is no doubt a barbaric thing, but it is the one barbarism that civilisation never will despise.

"Diamonds to fasten the hair, diamonds to fasten the sleeves,
Laces to drop from their rays like powder of snow from the eaves."

There is a pure beauty of colour about fine stones that is above all art. Jewels are mostly rendered inartistic by too much cutting and setting; a gem of many facets may flash more brightly, but what it gains in brilliance it loses in actual beauty. It reflects light better, but in so doing it descends a step in the scale of beauty, and becomes a mere reflecting moon, when it should be as the sun in heaven, an independent dispenser of its own splendour. Jewels were amongst the earliest of adornments, and their first possessors understood their treatment better than we. The ancient Greeks and Etruscans simply bored a hole in their precious stones, and inserted a wire hook wherewith to hang them on their necklets. Some of the Queen's finest jewels are uncut; and where she leads, surely gentlewomen may safely follow.

Their durability gives a special interest and nobility to jewels. A mother may delight in the thought that her daughter will wear her gems after her, and to her daughter they will be dear

as remembrances long after her mother has left her. Herrick reminds Dianeme—

> "That ruby which you wear,
> Sunk from the tip of your soft ear,
> Will last to be a precious stone
> When all your world of hearts is gone."

Gold and gems are often degraded by the trivial devices they serve to perpetuate. Why should a tennis-racket be chosen as a model for a lady's brooch? There is nothing lovely about a racket; it is a handy thing for knocking balls about with, but its shape is quite unworthy of clasping the lace at a lady's throat. Riding-whips form another inappropriate pattern, and floral brooches are worst of all. The grace of a flower lies in its delicate texture, and in the exquisite and fantastic forms it takes when blown about by the wind. To copy it in its comparatively uninteresting repose, and to perpetuate stiffened images of it in gold, is to libel the lovely original.

Jewels give to the plainest woman a radiance not her own. A certain refinement, however, is necessary to counterbalance their barbaric beauty, and stout women should be chary about wearing too many jewels at once. Even beauty gains an added brilliance from gems, and, indeed, there is no finer

product of civilisation than a beautiful woman beautifully dressed.

A word here may be said against the too free use of perfume. A faint, indefinable odour is not amiss, but once a scent asserts itself sufficiently for you to give it a name, it is wrong. The sweet violet teaches us the true secret of perfume. It is not until you are close to it that its faint, exquisite scent is perceptible. Its very faintness is an attraction, for it tantalises you into approaching and inhaling its sweetness again.

One of the good things Liberty has done is to utilise, more largely than any one for long before his day, hand-embroidery as a trimming. There is no more exquisite adornment. Compare the modern *passementerie*, its horrible stiffness of design and regularity of stitch, with what the mediæval ladies made each for herself at home. What her ancestresses did, the gentlewoman still may do. Take a strip of fine strong linen, draw your design (if Nature cannot inspire a new one, copy a good *old* one), then work it, but not too tightly, for by leaving the silk a trifle loose you give to the effect more naturalness and richness. Pale yellow-green, dim gold, faint faded pink, and a deeper red, such as one sees on a child's cheeks

after a breezy walk, one blue a shade paler than the sky, and another a faint reflection of the lobelia,—these make a very cunning artistic blend. Outline and vein the design with gold thread, leaving tiny gold loops to break the hard outline of the pattern, connect the pattern so that the underlying unused linen may be cut away without damaging it, and you will possess a *passementerie* rich and antique-looking, which you may wear and wear again throughout a lifetime. A really beautiful thing like this you will never tire of.

Another hint may be taken from the embroidered gauze shawls to be seen in South Kensington. Scalloped round, and with deep embroidered corners of gold, they suggest at once an idea for a very ravishing ball-dress. Mantles, too, divided into panels, narrow at the neck, wide at the hem, and with each panel bearing a boldly outlined mythical figure, contain the germ of a unique and beautiful opera-cloak. Copy what you see in South Kensington on silk or a fine pale cloth, modernise the shape, and edge it with a band of good fur, and you have a wrap that will never lose its distinction.

Where have we anything like the hand-embroidered dresses of old, with their quaintly

fashioned flowers, and flat substantial little leaves spraying methodically over a satin ground? A woman with a skilful needle never need be commonplace in her attire, for the finest magnificence of all is within her reach.

No splendour is more comfortable than that bestowed by fur. Nothing better becomes a woman than soft sable, and nothing better accentuates a fair complexion than sealskin. These furs are never out of fashion, and although some of the prices (£1,850, for instance) for single cloaks seem extravagant, yet there is plenty of good fur to be had for less, and money invested thus is not thrown away, for the fur can be altered and adapted to a hundred uses.

Magnificence in dress and pageantry has its value in art. Ruskin says: "Had it not been for the lovely and fantastic dressing from the fifteenth to the sixteenth centuries, neither French, nor Florentine, nor Venetian art would have risen to anything like the rank it reached."

Dress is of more importance in art now than ever it was; perhaps because some of the early fervour of art, for art's sake, has died down, and there has risen a race of painters who can do nothing without suggestions of colour from Oriental looms, Japanese

pottery, and ancient majolica and ormolu. The true artist—witness Millet and the *Angelus*—is independent of all such aids.

Perhaps Ruskin overstepped the mark a little when he said that "true nobleness of dress" was an important means of education. There are no "important means" of education, for everything that surrounds a child—the voices that speak to him, the faces that he looks at, the walls that are his immediate environment, and the trees, or bricks, or sea that lie beyond—all are part and parcel of his education; and who can say what is important and what is not? Not always can we achieve harmony, but the nearer we get to it, the better chance our children have of learning and understanding beauty. Dress is but an item in the plan, but if the dress be better or worse than it should be, it will jar. Let it be in keeping, and in harmony, and as beautiful as circumstances will permit, and it will do its share in forming a child's taste and giving it ideas. To accustom a child to ugly dress is to do it a wrong from which it will not readily recover.

The mind, weary of the commonplaces of fashion, hails a fancy-dress ball with delight. Fancy-dress balls are emphatically typical of our own century.

Before the French Revolution people did not trouble themselves to reproduce old dresses, but were quite content with their own; and the actress who played the part of *fiancée* to the King of Sparta wore a silver gauze skirt, and big panniers adorned with bunches of roses and silver fringe. When they *did* don fancy attire it was very fanciful indeed. Elizabeth loved to dress and act Artemis, and was painted in divers symbolic robes, whereon serpents testified to her wisdom, and a multiplicity of eyes and ears to her supposed pretensions to extraordinary acuteness.

In the eighteenth century occurred a brief furore for simplicity, and modish women posed as shepherdesses and milkmaids in low-necked satin gowns; a shepherd's crook, a short skirt, and a posy of flowers being sufficient for "local colour."

There was a passion for fancy-dress balls during the second Napoleonic empire. The Empress Eugénie set the mode; one of her own many magnificent costumes being that of a wife of a Doge of Venice. Many of the ladies of the court appeared in startling and interesting costumes. The Countess Castiglione, a beauty, who shot with a brilliance, comet-like in its brevity, across the scene, appeared as a Roman lady of the Decline. Her costume had

declined as well as the State, until not much of it was left, and silk tights bulked largely in the programme. Jewels were not a-wanting, for even her toes were adorned with rings.

The balls were the occasions of many magnificent spectacles. At one there was a "bees" quadrille, and twelve lovely girls in sparkling costumes were carried in, in four golden hives, by gardeners, to dance it. "It was a miracle of rare device"; but these brilliant days are over now, and under a sad and sober republic Paris has almost forgot the fantastic gaiety it once delighted in.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHILDREN'S DRESS.

ALMOST more interesting to a woman than her own clothes are those of her children; and perhaps nothing has more encouraged extravagance in this department than the recent furore for child-pictures, child-stories, child-heroes, and child-actors. Some of our best *littérateurs* write fairy tales and collect poems for children; some of our best-known artists paint them, and the most serious minds are very solemnly busied concerning their wise nurture and education.

There is just a possibility that this cult of the child is being a trifle overdone, and that the babe of to-day will be the prig of to-morrow. Nothing is more beneficial in the treatment of children than a little wholesome neglect. The fond mother who pets and kisses her little girl, gives her all she wants, lays the seed of future capriciousness, for a child judges the whole world by its mother. If

her mother indulges her, she expects that every one will do so. Who does not know the horrors of a spoiled child? The girl who is wrapped up carefully at the first suspicion of cold will never be so hardy as the little ragamuffin who runs barefoot through the winter snow. Hygiene and luxury are the salvation of the delicate and diseased, but the ruin of the healthy. Statistics say that not nearly so many children die now as formerly, but it is the delicate ones who are saved. The healthy ones fared rather better long ago than they do now. The child is not naturally a greenhouse plant, to be kept warm, and guarded, and ruled by the thermometer. He is the natural wild flower of the English woods; he brightens with the sun, is refreshed by the rain, survives the fog, and defies the wind. Who that loves children would not have them always so? Compare the child that runs through the rain unguarded, save by warm clothing, and the other who picks its way daintily, in goloshes, beneath the shade of an overpowering umbrella. The one is like the flower, brighter, fresher, sweeter for the showers; the other is careful and anxious before her time, afraid her hair will come out of curl, her stockings become specked, or her unsuitable hat get wet. Nurse's scolding

and mamma's displeasure weigh heavily on the little mind, and happiness is not for her.

A picturesque child is charming, a sanitary one edifying, but a natural one is delightful. The picturesque child is a little self-conscious (you cannot dress a child unawares); the sanitary one is almost too virtuous; but the natural one is quaint and fresh, a joy to talk to and a pleasure to watch.

It cannot be denied that for the first three months a baby needs all the warmth—of clothing, atmosphere and food—it can get. It is a strange, lonely little creature, cast suddenly forth into a world where everything is wide and high and cold. It wants to be coddled and wrapped up, and petted and cared for—but in moderation. At the very first you can make it as warm as you like, but once it has tasted the outside air do not stint it. Do not cover its face with a veil, but let it look out on the world as soon as possible. If the sun is too hot a parasol will shelter without stifling. We never enjoy the fresh air so much as during the first year of our lives. It is the very breath of a baby's being, a balm for all its sorrows, a cure for most of its diseases. Take a crying child to the open air, and in a minute it is soothed, and becomes all

delight and animation. And yet by a veil you put a barrier between it and its chiefest pleasure. A veil is permissible only on a journey or at night—in fact, when a child, for some reason or other, happens to be out of doors at a time not natural to it.

In keeping a baby warm the great thing is to begin next the skin, and have one or two woollen garments first of all; these will protect the more vital parts, and give more freedom in her outer clothes. Jaeger makes the daintiest little woollen shirts for babies in the finest and softest of wool. They are as smooth as linen and much kindlier. In regard to dresses there is great difference of opinion. A cream-coloured woollen dress is more artistic, just as pretty, and a great deal warmer than one of linen or cotton. It is indubitably better in winter for a baby; who, if so clothed, needs much less guarding from draught, etc. Everybody knows how shawls slip off; they are the most aggravating of garments, and are only endurable when put on toga-wise, and fastened on one shoulder with a brooch. In summer, however, the weather gives liberty; and mothers who delight in clean starched gowns and much embroidery may then gratify their tastes with impunity. Hygienic people have

a rabid horror of seeing babies in short-sleeved frocks. Wool is good, but the fresh air is much superior to it, as the outside world to the best ventilated room. A child covered to wrist and ankle in wool can never feel so fresh as the one whose arms and legs are free to the soft beneficial breezes of summer. Fresh air is a magnificent stimulant. Of course a delicate child cannot have the same freedom in this way as a healthy one; but fortunately the healthy ones are in the majority.

Next to a moderate quantity of wool, and a liberal supply of atmosphere, the best thing for a child is a little dirt. That dirt is the natural element of children no one, who has watched them, can doubt. The child who is kept clean and tidy from morning to night, and allowed only the decorous amusements of the nursery, is ignorant of real life and its manifold pleasures. Mothers do not like to see their children dirty; and their dislike is natural. Dirt is not æsthetic, and they would wish their offspring always to look like "Bubbles," or "Little Lord Fauntleroy"; but does any mother imagine that even these two immortals always looked like that? Put "Bubbles" out in a garden with one other boy, and go and look at him half an hour afterwards. His pretty frills would be all

awry, his picturesque green suit grimy, and, worst of all, his angelic expression would be nowhere. He would be "no angel," but that dearer and more delightful being—a real boy. And as for little Lord Fauntleroy, how long did his sash remain as his mother tied it? Any mother who has struggled with a Fauntleroy suit will know that here is its greatest difficulty. It is prettily designed, charming for a party, but a little too picturesque and theatrical for every-day life. A real boy needs tweed or serge loosely and easily made. Hood grows pleasantly plaintive over the easy attire of his youth,—

"Oh, for the riband round the neck,
The careless dog's ears apt to deck
My book and collar both!
How can this formal man be styled,
Merely an Alexandrine child,
A boy of larger growth?"

The sailor suit is undoubtedly the best, and any one to whom the idea of childhood is dear will refrain as long as possible from putting her boy into the mannish coats and hats, and the unblemished and expansive collar. Too soon schooldays will come, and the boy will ape the man, and scorn the apron strings to which he has previously been tied.

With girls, a mother has more scope, and in their case the temptation to make them picturesque is greater. Mothers should remember, however, that until the age of twelve or fourteen there is no sex; and were girls treated up till then more like boys they would be better fitted afterwards either to rival or mate them. Mothers should not consider sex too much until it asserts itself. A girl's dress should be as loose and easy and free as a boy's. No stays should be allowed. The soft padded bodices, miscalled children's stays, are permissible in winter on account of their warmth, but not in summer. They are too hot, and children's bodies should be kept as cool and fresh as possible. If they be healthy they will indulge in sufficient exercise of their own accord, and should be dressed accordingly on the same principles as athletes—their garments few, loose, easy, and porous.

A girl need not be kept tidy any more than a boy. If she is a trifle hoydenish at first it matters not—she will soon lose the characteristic, and a reformed hoyden is often the most womanly woman of all. If a girl have her fling in her earlier years she will settle down the more readily afterwards, and be less likely to indulge in the worse vagaries of maturity.

98926

No mother could endure to see her children ruffled and untidy all day long, and therefore a compromise may be suggested. Put your children in plain useful clothes in the morning. If you live in the country, turn them out of doors to get as dirty as they please; if in town, give them a large upper room to romp in. By midday they will have worked off some of the superfluous steam, and will permit themselves to be combed and smoothed and adorned for the afternoon.

There is a mania at present for making children

"quaint, and very
Like a modern Puritan;"

but the effect is only monotonous. There is a natural quaintness about children that needs no additions. On a plump, rosy child the close prim bonnet, the long demure frock have a certain piquancy; but a pale, delicate, attenuated child looks miserable thus attired. The fashion that preceded this, of loose cloaks and broad-brimmed picturesque hats, was similarly done to death. In it a pale, refined child looked charming, but to a stout child the cloak added unnecessary and unseemly breadth. The same rules hold good for children as for their mothers—garb them to suit themselves and not the mode. In the Puritan costume one feature is

very objectionable. It is a mistake to put little girls in long dresses that touch the ground. How are the children thus clad to jump about as children should? They are not even beautiful; form they have none; they are modelled on pillow-cases, and a pillow-case, though excellent for a pillow, is unworthy the human form divine.

Too elaborate headgear should never be indulged in. A child's head should be kept cool, and the only large bonnet permissible for it is the sun-bonnet. It is a mistake to go to any but a child's milliner for a child's hat. The average milliner is apt to mix up her subjects, and allow some suggestion from "grown-up" headgear to mar the simplicity that should be the principal characteristic of every part of a child's dress.

The most trying time of all for dress is that when a girl is undergoing the transition from child to woman. Very few succeed in suggesting the gradual transformation, and in allowing modishness to begin to temper simplicity in time. A mother in this case had best consult some friend whose taste she can trust, for a mother does not always realise her girl's growth, and is apt to keep her a child too long.

There are no more exquisite costumes for young

children than those George III.'s daughters wore when Sir William Beechey painted them. The slim white gowns, the short waists, the puffed sleeves, the curly hair restrained by a pretty snood, combine simplicity and grace. The Princess Amelia has, in addition, a soft white ruffle, fastened round her slim throat by a dainty knot of ribbon. Her sash is blue, and her face serious, girlish, and sweet. The Princess Augusta Sophia is a trifle more elaborate. She has a golden girdle, and her full sleeves are drawn in with yellow ribbons. Instead of a ruffle she has a lace collar of the well-known Medici shape. Princess Elizabeth, unlike the others, is in red, with picturesque sleeves; but she was artistic, and probably she had ideas of her own about her dress. Certainly she knew how to set off her fine person to advantage.

Very strange and unnatural seem to us some of the children in old paintings, with their grown-up airs, their long dresses, their Watteau trains and jewels. One good idea might be copied from last century. The tiny royal dukes of the day wore, with their mannish little coats, loose, soft, turnover linen collars, edged with a frill. These are much more bewitching, and must be much more comfortable, than the stiff linen abomination of to-day.

In selecting colours for the young, it should be remembered that children are much fairer and fresher in the skin than their seniors, and can wear with impunity brighter colours than they. A baby looks best in pink or blue or white; it is a pity to clothe it in sad greens or melancholy compromises between red and yellow. Let its colours be all as bright and young and crude as itself. As children grow older they lose this infant softness and bloom, and colours for them may be regulated by much the same rules as those of elder people.

CHAPTER IX.

DRESS AND THE AFFECTIONS.

THERE are but two occasions on which a woman makes a special effort to express her feelings in her dress, and these are upon a marriage and upon a death. Both are boundaries between an old world and a new, and the step in the one case is about as venturesome as in the other. The difference is that the one is a voluntary, the other an involuntary act, and this difference expresses itself in colour. White, the colour of purest hope, of brightest happiness, is typical of "the white funeral of a single life"; black, the colour of despair and desolation, is the colour that best expresses that fatal necessity which no man can combat. "I fear life's many changes, not death's changelessness," says one; but the bride, "in vestments white, and candid as her thoughts," fares forth into "that new world which is the old" with a very creditable fearlessness.

There is no wedding but has its underlying current of melancholy. The very efforts at joyousness, the mass of "sacrificial white," the boisterous cheerfulness of the wedding march, all help to afflict. Everybody is arrayed in garments of oppressive newness and brilliance, and these serve, in a way, to distract and enliven the guests and spectators. When sentiment threatens to overpower one, it is convenient to avert the coming tears by plunging headlong into a critical examination of the nearest bonnet. Therefore it is the duty of the wedding guest to make herself as gay as possible, and to give the "useful black dress," that is the standard wear of some economical ladies for all extraordinary occasions, a holiday for once. Except when a narrow purse necessitates it, black should be forbidden at weddings. Your dress must be bright, although as inexpensive as you please.

The bride naturally arrays herself in all her splendour, and is "with all her richest jewels" overcast. But although her satin be of the costliest, her lace of the finest, and her gems of the brightest, simplicity of cut and style are best. The afterthought of the wedding festivities at which the gown will be utilised is apt to induce a more ornate style than in reality befits the occasion. A bride

should remember that marriage is not all orange-blossom and pearls. It is the "discipline of humanity," and it is this thought that causes the curious gloom before referred to; the seriousness of the prospect should chasten into sobriety even the bridal costume. The Empire style is admirable for weddings, inasmuch as it enables a bride to be both simple and modish.

The bridesmaids are naturally as bright and dainty in their way as possible. Charles Lamb has a very pretty idea concerning them. He says: "To give the bride an opportunity of shining singly, they had come habited all in green. . . . They assisted in robes such as might have become Diana's nymphs —as such who had not yet come to the resolution of putting off cold virginity." The more fanciful the bridesmaids' dress the better for the pictorial effect of the scene. Ultra-modishness is never artistic enough for pageantry—especially such charming pageantry as this. There has been, and still is, a passion for dainty pagelings, in fantastic costumes, to bear the train; but is it not a pity to allow children to do anything that will make them self-conscious? Self-consciousness is the bane of manhood, and the lack of it constitutes half the delight and charm of childhood.

More difficult of selection even than the bridal dress is the going-away dress. Now that marriages mostly take place in the afternoon, and the bride does not, as a rule, travel more than a few hours that day, any pretty morning costume will do. If, however, a long journey, and an hotel at the end of it, are in store for the bride, she should suppress all yearnings after superior decorations, and choose rather an ordinary, simple, useful travelling dress. A dainty *confection*, with its freshness soiled, and its pretty draperies crushed, is to be avoided at any cost.

A curious instance of the way in which colour and feeling are intermixed, may be found in the fact that in Karpathos the old lady—be she mother or aunt—who relieves the ardent and embarrassed lover from the necessity of a personal proposal, intimates her errand by wearing different coloured stockings ; probably one is light and the other dark, and the idea may be to express the chequered and unsettled condition of the marriage state.

The "precious, pearly, purling" tears of a bride are wiped away by three square inches of cambric, encompassed by a liberal border of lace ; but the tears of the mourner can, in the opinion of some, only be properly dried by a handkerchief edged with

black. The "intellectual" tear, as Blake calls it, seems therefore to have very pronounced material wants.

Concerning the necessity and the becomingness of "mourning" with one's clothes as well as, or instead of, with one's heart, there are diverse opinions. Mourning is, however, not carried quite to the extremity it once was.

There has been in existence for the last fifteen or sixteen years a somewhat small and ineffectual society called the "National Funeral and Mourning Reform Association." It is a question whether this matter of mourning is an appropriate or a sufficiently important subject for a society; but the effort is praiseworthy, in its way, as a protest against what is often a very absurd and insincere custom. The wearing of black when in grief, however, is not a cause that one can fight for or against—it is a sentiment; and as a sentiment is an elusive, evasive thing that it is difficult to define, and impossible to suppress, it is a matter in which every gentlewoman should decide for herself, and in which none should too rashly condemn the other. The safest principle is, that whatever the feeling instinctively dictates cannot be wholly wrong.

There are those who wear mourning because

of the fashion, and not because of a real sorrow that they must express. A woman of this type in grief is a very pretty panorama. Discretion fights with nature, and sorrow is wise to the extent of extinction. From the early and overpowering grief that only crêpe can adequately set forth, to the first insidious lightening that makes crêpe cloth seem as grievous as necessary, until, "in equal scale weighing delight and dole," a grey, for the first time, is donned, the gradations are infinite.

Far be it from me to deride those gentle old-fashioned women, bred in formality, and timid as regards novelty, to whom a death naturally suggests black attire. The choice of their "mourning" affords a certain solace. It soothes their own feelings to express them outwardly, and the thought that by so doing they render tender homage to the dead has also its consolation. Such women often cling to black long after the prescribed time, anxious, perhaps, to show that

> "No lapse of moons can canker love,
> Whatever fickle tongues may say."

But it may be noted that it is never these women who err in excess. Their mourning is a natural thing, and its simplicity shows that it is real.

They

> "Have that within which passeth show;
> These but the trappings and the suits of woe."

It is a mind at leisure from its grief that has the time and inclination to linger over details.

The widow who considers with seriousness whether she will best express her sense of loss by a Marie Stuart cap or an Alsatian bow of tarlatan, is already half consoled, and will return in a month for another which will express "mitigated" grief by various lightsome pleatings and folds. She will be o'ercast with grief during the day in opaque lisse or tarlatan, and express her appreciation of the solace a good dinner affords by donning a cap of tulle to eat it in. The black dress will soon grow irksome, and require a dainty frilled fichu of tulle to make it endurable. She will, ere long, bestring herself with jet beads, that will take the place of the tears that have ceased to flow. Her sombre stuffs will be exchanged for something glossier, whereon an undulating pattern will further intimate how restive she is growing; and the day when black is mingled with grey, and violet is permissible, is one characterised by a sober but genuine joy.

There is a fascination about black crêpe dresses

exhibited in windows under such attractive headings as "sister's mourning," and the eye lingers long upon them, seeking vainly in the cunning folds and the artfully disposed crêpe in search of something that may justify the name.

The necessity a fashionable woman feels of mourning in detail is another interesting point. If she lift her skirts from the mud, she must show by her frilled black silk petticoat and plain black stocking that her grief has penetrated to her innermost sanctuaries. If she put up her parasol it is at once evident that she would deem it wrong even to shelter from the sun beneath anything less emotional than black chiffon arranged in puffs and frills, which, do what they will, cannot succeed in looking quite as sentimental as their wearer would wish.

> "Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
> Nor the furious winter's rages;
> Thou thy worldly task hast done,
> Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages."

But that is no reason why your survivors should not be becomingly, fashionably, and *mournfully* sheltered. Even the brooch that fastens the dress, and the chain that retains the watch, must do their duty in the livery of woe.

The "complimentary mourner" is, as a rule, a

woman so fond of variety, that she welcomes even mourning as an agreeable change. When an acquaintance dies, it is a delightful excuse for an entirely new set of clothes, which she wears only a month or so, returning with fresh delight to the alleviation of colour.

The poor relation, "that most irrelevant thing in nature," generally insists on mourning all her rich friends with mortifying ostentation. Her black is a trifle rusty, and her tears unduly frequent; but if the process afford her amusement, it is best to regard it as charitably as one can.

A good rule in mourning is that "a fault in feeling induces a fault in style," and those whose feelings are candid and true cannot do better than accept and adhere to its guidance.

Almost worse than the woman who mourns too much is the woman who mourns too little. One can forgive her garments, but not her apologies. The woman who is honestly indifferent to the custom of mourning, often good-naturedly follows it out of consideration for her friends; but the woman who, for lack of money, feeling, or taste, forbears from doing so, is always haunted by her omission, and her perpetual excuses are constant unpleasing reminders of the grief one fain would

hide away in some secret place that is all one's own.

Some maintain that a grief which declares itself in black clothes, floral wreaths, and dismal faces is less than that which cries its "cry in silence," and has done; but these forget that woman is not naturally a stoic, and that silent woe is impossible to her. She is emotional, and adores sympathy. At her best she is a trifle *posée*, and not averse to making a little parade of her feelings. There are, it is true, amongst the sex some austere enough to despise all this; but had they a proper *esprit de corps* they would would not do so, but would look with kindly and charitable eyes on these trifling manifestations, which, like the pebbles in a brook, help to break the first fierce flow of sorrow.

CHAPTER X.

RATIONAL DRESS.

"THE Men of Sense, my dear," says Lady Betty, in Colley Cibber's play, "make the best Fools in the World"; and the women of "reason" in the present day suffer from the same inconvenient capability.

It is curious that breeches were a special characteristic of the early Briton, and that they were known to Rome as "the breech'd barbarians." Nor do their breeches seem to have been a credit to them, for they are somewhat scoffingly referred to as "the old brækæ of the needy Briton." The Britons and the Gauls were the earliest in Western Europe to venture into trouserland, but in those days women were too lethargic or too indifferent to follow them, and, although now and again during the intervening centuries an occasional woman may be instanced as betraying yearnings after the masculine, it has remained for our century

first to embody this lurking yearning in visible form.

The "rational" woman, whilst professing to despise man, betrays her insincerity by her imitation of him. Even the gentlest and most irrational of the sex delight in robbing this helpless victim. His coat has served as a model for bodices and jackets, his hat has been taken over still more completely, and even his shirt, his one clean and becoming garment, and his tie, his only little bit of decoration and opportunity for colour, have been annexed. His waistcoat strap was not long ago imitated, and, unfortunately, man has now nothing left that he can call his own except his trousers. 'Tis true that *he* knows, and *she* knows, that even these are not wholly his, and that etherealised versions in linen and cotton, wondrously adorned with lace and insertion, have long been part of the daily wear of women. There was a time when women were so proud of them that it was the correct thing for little girls to have their frilled *culottes* longer than their dresses. To this indecorous fashion succeeded a sudden wonderful modesty that was but the recoil before the spring. The Bloomer costume of 1848 was only our grandmothers' juvenile costume exaggerated.

The trousers were fuller, and drawn into a frill at the ankle, after a manner meant to be attractive, and the skirt was shorter, more like a deep frill round the waist than anything else. The bodice was modelled on a man's coat, and consisted of a cutaway jacket, a vest, stiff linen collar, and tie.

Within the last decade fresh efforts have been made to rob man of his trousers. In vain does the rational woman seek to hide this, her real wish, under the disguise of the divided skirt. The divided skirt is, as Carlyle would say, mostly futile. It isn't trousers (though it would like to be), and it isn't a skirt. Outwardly it has the semblance of a rather baggy, ill-made petticoat; inwardly—but the wrongs of her who wears the divided skirt are yet to be written. Talk of "suffering" under a husband's rule; it is as nought to the suffering a victim of the rationalisation of the petticoat endures. What woman does not know the agony of a petticoat that *will* twist itself between her legs? Think of a skirt that *always* does it! There is a vein of martyrdom in women, and this is one of its strongest manifestations. The "rational" dresser heroically declares the divided skirt the acme of comfort, but "trust her not, she is fooling thee."

Those who have attended rational dress meetings

know with what vigour and ardour the possibility of appearing publicly in trousers is there discussed. Designs are brought forward, and hopes mount high. Some yearn after the looseness of the Turkish pantaloon; some (and perhaps they have reasons "collateral with ankles") incline to the pert and dainty knickers. But when the matter is put to the vote, and some daring Amazon offers, if twenty will promise to follow, that she will lead the way, the project suddenly collapses. There have not yet been found twenty who will, with one accord, cease to bow the knee to Baal. After all, even a rational dresser is a woman.

Now and again rumours run round the papers that So-and-so wears yellow satin breeches beneath her ball-dress; and possibilities of society dames discarding the outer skirt, and emulating the attractive but uncommendable chorus-girl, float before us.

No one will deny that children and young girls would be vastly attractive in neat knee-breeches, a becoming blouse, and a picturesque sash; but, alas! two-thirds of us women are neither girls nor children. How could a mother in knickerbockers inspire awe in the hearts of her peccant brood? Where would be the awful terror that now hangs, cloud-like, round the spinster aunt were she to visit us in

Turkish trousers? Think of our grandmothers knitting by the fireside in a kind of adapted pyjama suit! What of a Sister of Mercy dispensing charity in a rational bifurcated costume, or of a nurse tending her patient in emulative breeches? If she wore, in addition, the necessary apron, she would be but a tasteless travesty of the harmless and inoffensive provision merchant.

Put women into trousers, and the halo that still lingers round these "mysterious priestesses" would be gone for ever. Age would no longer command reverence, nor maternity consideration; even youth and beauty would fall from their high estate, and become the sport and the pastime, instead of the aspiration and romance of man.

The rational dress movement can never succeed, because it appeals only to individuals. Many women have physical peculiarities or defects—as, for instance, corpulence—which would make it impossible for them to wear the reformed costume with either grace or decency, and there is more sister-feeling among women than some give them credit for. How few women strike out a line for themselves! They love to move *en masse*, and to this may be ascribed the inexplicable dominance of fashion. Some people call them sheep-like and

cowardly; but let us consider the feeling with a more kindly eye and call it *esprit de corps*. Surely no woman would care to adopt a costume that would leave the majority of her sisters out in the cold. If her hesitation in this matter arise really from the less creditable dislike of singularity, let her adopt the other motive also, and, by making of her impulse a principle, strengthen and fortify it.

Dr. Wendell Holmes says: "The less there is of sex about a woman the more she is to be dreaded"; and it is true. Which is the sweeter, more gracious, and more kindly woman—the political enthusiast, the rabid supporter of the divided skirt, or the simple everyday woman, with her pretty dress, her charming ways, and her delicious and wholesome freedom from faddishness? "Wild women" expend all their fervour on their "cause," and have none left for individuals. Moreover, continual discussion is apt to develop that acrimony which is so often latent in feminine nature, and which the "discipline" of husband and children does more than anything to hold in check. It is useless to deny that woman naturally inclines to triviality, and it is only her affections that enable her to rise above it.

The natural woman loves and understands man far too well ever to wish to borrow his position, his work, his trousers. She sees through his hollow affectation of importance, and envies him not the proud but unpleasant tasks of earning the daily bread, filling up the census-paper, carrying the rugs, and paying the taxes. She has for him the pity that is akin to love. She knows his clothes don't look half so nice as hers do, and that without her he is a poor, weak, miserable, buttonless creature. She knows he does his best to save her all the actual disagreeables of life, and in return tolerates his feeble attempts at satirising her. Only once in a while, when he *does* hit home, will she think it worth her while to revenge herself on the victim nearest at hand.

It will perhaps be said that rational dress is not all an affair of trousers. Neither is it; but most of its other demands (with the exception of the abandonment of the corset) have already been conceded because they are rightfully founded on hygienic principles. The divided skirt goes beyond this; it is not specially hygienic, it is decidedly unbeautiful, and it is, moreover, the portion of their creed by which the rational dressers stand or fall.

I have before said that where the rational dressers fail is through their inability to appreciate the beauty of form. There is a delightful person in an American novel called "East Angels," who believes in all persons presenting themselves exactly as Nature made them. "She therefore presented herself that way; and it was seen that Nature had made her with much shoulder-blade and elbow, a perfectly flat chest, over which the green gown was, in addition, tightly drawn, to expand below, however, over one of those large, loose, flat waists concerning which the possessors, for unexplained reasons, always cherish evident pride." All sensible women will say that if Nature had really been so unkind to Penelope (that was her name), Penelope would have been wiser to conceal, as best she might, the sad injustice.

The opponents of the corset and the waist are a little too fond of pointing to the Venus de Milo as a proof of how beautiful a waistless woman can be. They forget or ignore the fact that the Venus de Milo is a charming nudity, and that it is the custom in most countries to cover oneself with clothes. Had Venus been compelled by a cold climate to drape herself, we have little doubt she would have worn stays, to give her clothes the

shape they lacked and without their aid could not maintain. Corsets that do not compress but merely outline the figure are distinct beautifiers, and have ever been so regarded. That sensible old poet, Dan Chaucer, speaks with pride and pleasure of the "middle, small and well-y-made," of one of his women. Would Keats ever have written—

> "Let once again these aching arms be placed,
> The tender goalers of that waist"—

had the waist in question been one like Penelope's?

It is this undue ugliness that is the great natural foe of the rational dress movement. The love of beauty is strong, and will ever prevail. Even so sober and ethical a writer as the author of "Mark Rutherford" upholds it:—

"The desire to decorate sometimes, in some way or other, with more or less care, is nearly universal. The most sensual and the meanest almost always manifest an indisposition to be content with mere material satisfaction. . . . The instinct even in its lowest form is divine. It is a commentary on the text that man shall not live by bread alone. It is evidence of an acknowledged compulsion—of which art is its highest manifestation—to escape."

In the play of Colley Cibber's already referred to there is further evidence in favour of Beauty.

Lady Easy is of opinion that "'tis the Beauty of the Mind alone that gives us lasting value." But Lady Betty knows better. She declares that "the only merit of a Man is his sense, but doubtless the greatest value of a woman is her Beauty. An homely Woman at the Head of a Fashion would not be allow'd in it by the Men, and consequently not followed by the Women: so that to be successful in one's Fancy is an evident sign of one's being admired, and I always take Admiration for the best Proof of Beauty, and Beauty certainly is the Source of Power, as Power in all Creatures is the height of Happiness."

Tolstoy, also, with his usual brutal frankness, says that men are ever ready to forgive a woman "all her ignominy," whilst they would not "forgive her a costume badly cut, badly made, and without taste"; and Tolstoy is a realist, if, at times, rather a grim one.

There are two rational costumes, however, that have pretensions to beauty. The Jeuness-Miller arrangements are ingenious and becoming, if not strictly hygienic; and the "Eilitto" is, for country wear especially, really admirable. The skirt is made in a few very broad box pleats, mounted on elastic, so that it gives with every motion. It has

no foundation, and is lined a good way up with mackintosh. This skirt is attached to a bodice of Jaeger material, so that its weight is equally spread over the body. The bodice and jacket and hat belonging to the dress are all pretty much like other people's. The "Eilitto" is, of course, specially designed for muddy weather, and is five inches off the ground. No petticoats are worn with it, and a pair of knickerbockers of the same tweed as the skirt supplement its warmth. Gaiters extending from knee to instep keep the legs warm, and by being of the same tweed as the skirt render the exposure of the ankle less conspicuous. It should be mentioned that the ingenious lady who designed and patented this dress is Mrs. Charles Hancock, and that its name, "Eilitto," is her own, Ottilie, reversed.

Mark Twain says that "A large part of the daughter of civilisation is her dress, as it should be. Some women would lose half their charm without dress, and some would lose it all." And this is the wrong the rational woman would do her sex. One has only to study a rational and a fashionable woman together to realise the melancholy truth of Mark Twain's remarks.

Still the rational dresser has her uses and her

place in the panorama of femininity. She is like the poplar, which, straight, tall, and unattractive in itself, yet, by its austerity, throws the other trees, with their graceful branchings, their airy irregularities, into piquant and delightful relief.

CHAPTER XI.

RECURRENT MODES.

IN the old days, when fashions lasted a generation, and one mode evolved slowly out of another, there was no need to search the past for novelties for the present. But nowadays, when a season is enough to stale a fashion, all countries and all ages are ransacked for new varieties. Petticoats have always had a way of expanding and contracting (like umbrellas) just as Fashion smiled sunshine or rained disapproval on them; but the first really noteworthy case of "throwing back" occurred at the time of the French Revolution. Not that the *sans-culottes* really deserve the credit of it, for even before the assembling of the States-General, Marie Antoinette, that dainty Queen of Modes who expiated so tragically her womanish follies, had tried to inaugurate a classical revival. She had a very pretty taste in dress; and the cumbersome hoop, the powdered

hair, the laboured elegance of her time had palled upon her. She went a-milking in search of simplicity, but found it not; for the *petit Trianon*, although a very modish dairy, was not exactly Arcadia. So next she sought to emulate the classic dames of old; and the irrepressible *tiers état*, after interrupting her private petticoat revolution by shutting her up in prison, and immolating her on the altar of *La Guillotine*, paid tribute to her good taste by an energetic resuscitation of Athenian garb. But the garments that were ample protection in the "eternal summer" of Greece must have been more airy than comfortable in northern Gaul. A piece of linen laced across the front took the place of the warm, if unreasonable, corset. Sometimes, if the dress were full, even petticoats were discarded, and the winds of heaven were allowed to buffet the limbs of the unfortunate citizeness as roughly as they pleased. The dresses were low of neck and short of sleeve alike in sunny July and drear December. After the fall of Robespierre, the pendulum swung back, and "Puffs, Powders, Patches" ruled again. But the Empress Josephine, like all women of taste, adored the classic dress, and once more the courtly beauties adapted the *chiton* and *himation* of ancient

Greece to their modern requirements. And ever since, although Dame Fashion occasionally loses her head and runs riot in absurdities, there have been recurrent revivals of simplicity.

In 1820 the straight and scanty skirts, the short waist—quaint and pleasing in spite of its unreality—were the fashion again. Indoors all was charming, but out of doors the absurdly unprotective scarf and the overpowering bonnet rendered the classic dress ridiculous. It was indeed the golden age of the bonnet; never before or since has it attained such dimensions. The "Conversation" bonnet of a few years before led up to it, and Heine had seen it upon the Pont St. Martin and levelled an epigram at it. Our grandmothers in their girlhood were wondrously prudish. Their curtseys were demure, their glances shy, their blushes many, and their bonnets big. A modern rhymster has waxed pertly sentimental over them.

"Ye coales into ye Scuttle slide,
Soe yn her Hatt wolde I and hide
To steale some kisses—two or three;
But synce she never asketh me,
Ye scornful Cynick doth deride
Her scuttle Hatt."

But to-day there are few—and these be æsthetes

—who model themselves direct upon the antique. We prefer our dress, our furniture, and our china all at second hand. So when Sarah Bernhardt charmed all Paris by her Directorate dresses in *La Tosca*, it was to the Directorate—or rather to Sarah, its modern exponent—that the *modistes* went for their ideas. With a sublime impartiality they borrowed alike from the men and women of Napoleonic days; and a few years ago we were favoured with pocket flaps, button-over coats, frilled fichus, and ungarnished skirts *ad lib.* Afterwards, as in Revolutionary days, there was a tendency to lapse back into the frills and furbelows that came before, for the passion for the eighteenth century that has shown itself in literature has also had its influence in dress. "Belinda-like" we have even essayed the incomparable patch. Yet all in vain. There is an aroma as of dead rose-leaves about the last century that we can never reproduce, for its charm is partly one of memory, and partly one of leisure. We have no time now to be courtly and dignified, to trim and clip our prose, and marshal forth our verses with disciplined regularity. Our very humour is "new," and lacks the mellow charm of the *Spectator* and its successors. It is curiously illustrative of the difference in the ages that a century ago

they applied the patch with their own deft fingers —yesterday the manufacturers wove them in our veils, and sold them at nothing and three-farthings a yard. They are adjusted with hurried fingers so that one patch obscures the sight, another irritates the nose, and a third accentuates any undesirable blemish.

The drama is, indeed, one of the strongest influences on dress, and the costumes are now so accurately reproduced that they are at once a temptation and an inspiration. Even the Cleopatra revivals of the winter before last led to Egyptian hair-dressing, serpent ornaments, and loose draperies of glittering gauze.

The makers of fashion must be diligent students of the past, for nearly every little novelty of to-day has a historic origin. For instance, a recent favourite device has been to button the sleeve to the elbow on the inner side of the arm. This was particularly common in the fifteenth century. The women were nothing if not domestic then, and ready at all times to unbutton and roll up their sleeves, and do whatever homely tasks might be required of them. The same mode adopted to-day for an ordinary *walking* costume is, however, a little absurd.

The girdle, too, a standard item of dress in the days of loose and shapeless drapery, has been more strangely misapplied. The softly folded cloth sash, or richly bedight zone, that drew in the ample robes of classic and mediæval days, was both ornamental and useful; but the imitations in *passementerie* and baser braid-work, meaninglessly laid across the recent tight gored skirts, are but an insult to their memory. Long ago each article of dress had its use and its meaning; but to-day we copy the form and forget the purpose; and dress, from a decorative covering, has become a heterogeneous collection of useless anachronisms.

In the fastening together of garments the modern hook and eye have displaced the more picturesque methods of old. The mean-looking yet effective hook is indeed typical of the age. We study utility first, and then try to conciliate our half-defunct sentiment for beauty by adding a hasty attempt at ornament. The Danes tied their cloaks with cords, and the Britons fastened theirs with brooches, and later on a bit of ribbon drew the outer garment together. To-day above our hooks we have, by way of decoration, a formal knot of *passementerie*, a sewed-on bow of ribbon, or an ornamental buckle that is more hypocritical

still, inasmuch as it looks as if it really fastened, when, but for the invisible hook, its flimsiness would result in sudden collapse and disaster. In the days of the Plantagenets the mantle was fastened across the breast by buttoned-on straps, and these we see imitated in the Inverness capes. Needless to say that in them, also, the hook and eye do all the work.

A favourite pattern lately has been the true lover's knot. Sometimes it is embroidered on the material, but more often woven in it. It is essentially a sentimental device, but its common use seems to break the spell a little. Think of the stole Edward the Confessor was buried in. After seven hundred years his grave was opened, and, lo, the true lover's knots broidered on it in pearls by dead and gone fingers were still in preservation! Many another true knight and kingly man was thus adorned. In a fourteenth-century romance, King Arthur is described as wearing a mantle all "Trowlt with trulufes and tranes between."

Only yesterday our mantles were brilliant with artificial jewels, but of old, also,

> "Many was the rich stone
> That the mantles was upon."

The only difference was that then none but rich

and great ladies wore jewelled cloaks, and all their jewels were real.

Even in our masculinity we are not original. Mr. Pepys describes how the ladies wore riding habits that were "just for all the world" like his; so that, "only for a long petticoat, dragging under their men's coats, nobody would take them for women in any point whatever, which was an odd sight, and a sight that did not please me." Good Sir Roger de Coverley experienced, a little later on, the same unpleasant surprise, and very nearly addressed a mannish young person as "sir"; a timely flutter of the "tempestuous petticoat" saved him, and he said "madam." Nor is even the shirt front a modern theft, for in the days of Edward VI. the good wives wore a trim little habit shirt, which they called a partlet.

It is curious to find that always, in every age, when women were most restless for variety, it was in their sleeves that they first tried to exercise their fancy. Never, since the pre-Conquest days, were sleeves so simple as a few years ago. They were either puffed or tied, slashed or bunched in some absurd way or other. Now surely the arm should, before any other part of the body, be simply and sensibly clad, and it is a sign of the

rational and hygienic spirit of our generation that the sleeve was, for a season, sensible and comfortable. But Fashion never will let well alone; and after a time the sleeve became too tight. Then followed a natural reaction in favour of the wide and picturesque sleeve. But in this again there has been excess. The sleeve, as Oscar Wilde, in the days of his knee-breeches, described it, was admirable—loose from shoulder to elbow, close-fitting—not *tight*—to the wrist, and made to lace or button, so as to be turned up at will. But not content with this, the fashion went further, and brought forth again the unwieldy pendent sleeve that was one of the most senseless of mediæval modes. When they sought out strange devices then they were very strange indeed. The Saxon women were simple enough in their ways; it was the proud and fanciful Norman women, coming over in the wake of the Conqueror, who grafted foolish extravagances on the plain, if somewhat bulky, dress of the early English. The recent fancy for having sleeves different in colour and material from the dress is a very old, but not a very praiseworthy one. It cannot be called artistic, inasmuch as it gives the arms an awkward and detached look as if they had been added as an afterthought.

Nothing is more emblematic of the change in ideas concerning the status of womanhood than the metamorphosis that has taken place in female headgear. In the old days women were simple, inoffensive creatures; and, whether mothers, wives or sisters, merely the dependants or servitors of men. They went but little abroad, and, when they did, covered their heads with a bit of woollen cloth, called by the English a head-rail, by the Normans a *couvre-chef*. The more frivolous permitted themselves the indulgence of a row of flat curls across the forehead, but the primitive "bang" was a very feeble and half-hearted affair at the best. Sometimes the *couvre-chef* was almost large enough to be called a mantle, and extended to the knee. Even queens wore the modest kerchief, and wore it, too, *above* their crowns. The Norman ladies plaited their hair in two long tails that hung below their kerchiefs; but such was their exceeding modesty, that the tails were often tied up in long silk bags (like modern umbrella-covers), and so concealed from actual view. Nevertheless, the judicious monument-maker, when he sculptured their images in brass and stone, to keep alive the memory of their lineaments, took care to lay their long plaits across their breasts. And thus was

the pride of woman in her long hair administered to even after death. In Plantagenet days the wimple and gorget came into vogue, and the unfortunate females of the time must have felt rather overpowered by their various draperies. But before long the *couvre-chef* diverged from its simplicity. At one time it subsided into a hood; at another it expanded itself on long rails beyond the head, or twisted itself into a rabbit's ear on either side of the head. Gradually, however, it grew smaller, and first the cap and then the hat took its place. For long the hat was the privilege of the stronger vessel; but woman encroached further and further on man's property, and at last succeeded in annexing the hat itself.

For many a day fancy ran into eccentricity in the matter of headgear, but after women began to go out more freely, and to take a more active part in the affairs of the world, the head-dress became gradually saner and simpler; and although, for a time, in the eighteenth century, hair-dressing grew monstrous and unnatural, yet the classic revival at the Revolutionary epoch did away with that too, and since then there have never been any very outrageous vagaries. Prettily modest in their way were the drooping curls our mothers wore in their

girlhood; but the Girl of the Period had not then dawned upon an astonished world. When she did she threw the curls back, or cut them off altogether, set a jaunty little hat on her head, and with that the long transition from the ancient *couvre-chef* to the modern hat was at an end. And since then bonnets have diminished, until a short time ago they disappeared altogether, leaving only a bow of ribbon or a Grecian fillet to act as lieutenants until their return. The restless, frizzled heads are everywhere and in everything, and one by one the strongholds of man are being taken. What would our English ancestresses think if they saw their descendants? They would draw their headrails closer, and blush behind them. If only one could feel that the insides of the heads had developed as much as the outsides it would not be so bad. But the body and the cloth are, according to Teufelsdröckh, the site of the person, and now that the foundation is laid perhaps the building will proceed apace.

Many another ephemeral mode could we trace home to its origin, but the pastime, though pleasing to us, might, if too long continued, prove wearisome to our readers. An hour or two spent over Lely's, Kneller's, Gainsborough's and Reynolds'

portraits would be sufficient to yield a host of illustrations. The dress of Queen Charlotte, in the picture in Hampton Court, is an admirable example of the eighteenth-century style. It has purity of colour, grace of outline, and simplicity of detail to commend it. There is indeed a decorous modishness about figure and dress that make it wonderfully attractive.

A certain irreverence of fashion is all that remains to be noted in this connection. With sublime impartiality she borrows from every rank, from every age, and every country. The farmer's smock Liberty has utilised and idealised into all sorts of exquisite garments. The sailor's hat and collar and blouse have been furbished forth in many a diverse colour and material, until at last to be marine is to be monotonous, and the soul, weary of mismanaged nauticalities, yearns for a sumptuary law, forbidding, for the space of ten years, all further use of anchors, gold buttons, and ribbons bearing deceptive legends concerning more "airy navies" than the planet could contain. Every now and again there is a beef-eater epidemic, and the crowns of hats swell out into huge receptacles of emptiness, and one's whole nature begins to abhor such vacuums. The unfortunate Scot has been robbed

again and again. His honest woollen Tam o' Shanter is caricatured in velvet and silk; his historic tartans, whose ugliness is redeemed by their old-time significance, are borrowed by audacious Sassenachs, and put to all sorts of inappropriate uses. The shamrock of Ireland is printed on cottons and woollens, and served last winter as the pattern of a tripartite bonnet. At one time hats were all as tall as those of the Welsh countrywomen; at another it was the striped skirt and serge jacket of the Newhaven fishwife that won renown. But here, for once at least, fashion failed, for what is *one* striped petticoat compared to the six or eight ample skirts of the original? And what is the whole costume without the creel, the frilled white cap, the ubiquitous fish-scales, and the resonant call of the fish-wife herself?

Last, but not least, even the sleeves of the Bishop are not sacred from this daring thief, and a season or two ago might have been seen in their native lawn flaunting gaily amidst the annual frivolities on Ascot Heath.

CHAPTER XII.

DRESS IN HISTORY.

IT is the impulse of the day to make of history a picture. No dry bones of fact and date content us now. We like to bid our puppets live again; and for this purpose we pry with curious eyes into the most trifling details of their lives, their wardrobes, their cupboards, their bedchambers,—nothing is sacred from us.

Women, above all, like to know the robes their queens of fancy wore, and serious historians, like Froude, disdain not to humour their desires. Costume has indeed become no inconsiderable part of history, and the recent reproduction of historical dramas has done much to popularise its study. The appearance of the divine Sarah as Cleopatra was an event, and her costumes were the result of much study, and the cause of much criticism. The story of "the serpent of old Nile" was indeed set forth right regally; nor was Joan

of Arc (a very dissimilar person) treated with less consideration.

Yet there remain a-many queenly women, whom the modern drama wots not of, around whom memory loves to linger. Is there not Boadicea, that gallant mother, who, when her husband died, was father and mother both to her helpless girls? For them she was scourged by Roman rods; for them she transformed herself into a warrior-queen, and carried a lance, and wore bronze plates above her woman's breast. A kingly-looking woman she must have been with her two tunics, one to her feet, the upper one to her knees, checkered in brilliant barbaric colours—purple, red, violet, and blue. Her ample cloak was fastened on her right shoulder with a fibula, and her long yellow hair fell loose about her. Her stern face fitly expressed her strong character, for the Iceni had never a braver ruler than she.

Then there was Godiva, whom we might fitly call the Queen of No-clothes. At the last Lady Godiva procession in Coventry she was travestied by a professional equestrienne, in a satin tunic, tulle veil, and satin boots. The lady, we are told, performed the task with "modest grace"; but not the best simulated modesty in the world could excuse

her from thus insulting the memory of the gracious and beautiful wife of Leofric, one of the loveliest and finest women of all time. It has been said that Godiva never took her famous ride at all; that in her day there was no town of Coventry, but only a church and a monastery. 'Tis a pity! The Godiva of poetry and romance, who stole down the stair "like a creeping sunbeam," clothed only "with chastity," has been a cherished memory these many years, and we are loth to lose her. Not all the prudish joy in her clothedness atones for the loss of that pretty story of tender and heroic devotion to a downtrodden people.

We may say, perhaps, that the world has seldom been dazzled by such a carnival of dress as blazed on the Field of the Cloth of Gold. It was the apex of barbaric splendour, the triumph of outward show, typical of the good old days when magnificence was the duty and the right of kings, when the sumptuary laws kept not only the lower classes, but the gentlewomen of the court in dutiful subjection. In this enlightened century we may dress as we choose, and we take full advantage of our liberty to express our individualities with decision, if not with taste. In consequence, display has lost its distinction, and we have no more goodly

shows and joyous pageants. The Lord Mayor's Show is typical of our temper. It is laboured, inartistic, and uncouth. 'Arriet gapes in open-mouthed amaze at it, and, hampered by the ubiquitous "byby," waits hours at crowded corners to feast her eyes upon it. The gentlewoman sits closer to her fire, and laughs in her sleeve alike at the civic effort and the untutored delight. Yet there is melancholy in the thought. It is the solitary survival of past splendours, when England was young, and merry, and frolicsome, and loved to disport herself. Then were there Maypole dances, country fairs, Yule-tides, and All-hallow-e'ens; but these, with many another old-fashioned junketing, have all vanished and are nearly forgotten. Instead we have the too subtle joys of "culture," the ingeniously "adapted" drama, and the festive, if elusive, Mahatma.

Froude describes happily the progress of the fair and frail Anne Boleyn through the city on the day before her coronation. Arrayed in gauzy white, with her hair, confined only by a coronet of gold and diamonds, flowing over her shoulders, and seated in her white chariot with its golden canopy, she must have been a pretty sight. Her palfreys were dressed in trailing white damask,

and the silver bells of the harness jingled as she went.

"Alas!" said a contemporary chronicler (how mighty moral these ancient chroniclers were, to be sure!) "within the hollow round of that coronet

> Kept death his court, and there the antick sat
> Scoffing her state, and grinning at her pomp;
> Allowing her a little breath, a little scene
> To monarchize, be feared, and kill with looks,
> Infusing her with self and vain conceits,
> As if the flesh which veiled about her life
> Were brass impregnable; and, humoured thus,
> Bored through her castle walls, and farewell, queen."

Next day, at Westminster Hall, she sat in state with diamonds in her hair, and a purple mantle furred with ermine about her.

Poor Anne of Cleves was never half so gay as she. She wore a short, round Dutch skirt as homely as herself; and she was wise, for delicate and dainty robes would but have mocked her.

I need not here discuss the wonderful wardrobe of Elizabeth—"her termagant majesty," as Walpole called her. Two thousand dresses would constitute a very respectable supply even for to-day, when new dresses are a commonplace. Elizabeth's dress (like her affections) was characterised by considerable variety, and a somewhat extravagant

fancy. Many of her astonishing costumes have been perpetuated in paint. She delighted in symbolic robes, broidered over with the eyes and ears of lizards, crocodiles, and serpents, etc., and these were supposed to figure forth her wisdom and acuteness. Thus, when her verbal flatterers were silent for a space, her mute yet eloquent dress continued to feed the cravings of her vanity. In Hampton Court there is a portrait of her in a "fancy dress" (but all her dress was fanciful) as thick and rich with pearls as the heaven above us with immortal lights.

Her rival, the hapless Queen of Scots, was equally fond of dress. Wonderful, even in her young days, when, as the saucy and beautiful Queen of France, she was the most brilliant figure at a brilliant court, were her robes. On the day of her marriage with Francis II. she wore a dress of deep blue Persian velvet, covered with precious stones, and enriched with lovely white embroidery. The jewels in her crown were estimated at three hundred thousand crowns, and her train was carried by two young girls. The dress (and the wearer) must indeed have been, as a French writer has it, "*une chose admirable à voir.*" Very different was the pageant (yet not less striking in its way) nearly

thirty years later at Fotheringay. The captive queen had laid aside the plain grey dress that was her every-day wear in prison, and arrayed herself royally, if funereally, in black satin, all looped and slashed with black velvet. The false hair that helped to keep her beauty young was carefully dressed; the pointed coif, familiar to all nowadays as hers in particular, although in reality a common wear of the time, was set above, and a long veil of finest lawn flowed behind. It was a fitting toilette for the occasion, but to be fitting was not Mary's only thought. Her instincts were intensely dramatic, and she wished to create an effect. Therefore, when the last moment came, her waiting-women took away the jacket and skirt of black, and lo, in a moment, from a queen of dolours Mary had become a queen of revenge, for beneath her sober black dress was hid another suit of crimson, and so habited she journeyed forth into the country from whose bourn no traveller returns. There was still a third transformation that Mary had not counted on, for when the head was severed from the body, the shock dislodged the comely coif and youthful hair, and exposed to the wondering crowd the scanty faded locks and wrinkled brow that Mary had before concealed so well.

The English Mary was not so fond of dress as her sister and cousin, and in her time there were stern sumptuary laws limiting the untitled gentlemen and gentlewomen of the Court to one velvet and one damask gown a year. A satin dress for summer and another for winter were allowed; and for every silk gown another of felt or russet, camlet or worsted had to be got, and worn three days in the week. There was a surveyor of wardrobes, who did not neglect to count over the dresses, and report unfortunate delinquents who had not been able to resist the temptation of the newest thing out. Fortunate indeed was it that the day of cheap sales was not yet, else had the way of gentlewomen been hard, and the necessity of withstanding bargains been more almost than the oppressed lady-in-waiting could endure.

For the most part, however, our English queens have been too much occupied with their *rôle* as "mothers of king-folk," and rulers of the people, to care much for being leaders of fashion. It has remained for our own Princess of Wales to perform this duty, and perform it with a grace and wisdom worthy of her position near the throne.

On the other hand, the queens of France have been more distinguished for setting the mode than,

perhaps, for anything else. Catherine de Medici, stern old plotter as she was, liked her own way in dress as in everything else. She invented a corset beside which the whalebone one so abominated by the "rational" dressers of to-day seems soft and ineffective. It was of openwork steel, inflexible as armour, covered with velvet. Bars of steel supported the skirt and heavy hoop at either side. It was not till Elizabeth's time that the whalebone corset was used at all. Thirteen inches was the regulation size of a waist at Catherine de Medici's court. She it was also who introduced the *fraise* or *collet montant*. Italy was then the headquarters of art, science, and fashion, and Catherine, although neglected and slighted when in her own country, was quick to maintain its honour after she had left it, and impose its fashions on gay Lutetia. The moralists of the day were wonderfully severe on the vanity of wearing the *fraise*. A rhyme of the day runs,—

"Hommes et femmes empèsent par orgueil,
Fraises longues pour ne trouver leur pareil,
Mais en enfer le diable soufflera,
Et a brusler les âmes le fer allumera."

These ancient moralists had a swift and decisive way of consigning people to Inferno for every little

vanity that one cannot but admire. The devil has had, of late, considerable cause to whistle over the prevalence of the *fraise*, for it has been the mode once more, and aspiring amateurs, in every part of the country, have mismade it in a way to make Catherine de Medici, did see she it, yearn for a second St. Bartholomew—not of Huguenots.

The *fraise* was sometimes worn very high, so much so that one gentleman asked Marguerite de Valois how she could sup soup with her *fraise* on; but Marguerite, as befits a woman, was equal to the occasion, and sent for a long-handled spoon, by whose aid she partook of her *potage* with such grace and *aplomb* that not a spot fell on the obtrusive collar.

But Catherine de Medici, although a beautiful woman of a fine Italian type, with refined features, lovely dark eyes, and majestic bearing, was yet astonishingly simple in her dress, and many of her court ladies were gayer than she. When Henry II. died, she mourned him with fervour and publicity, wearing a plain full skirt and buttoned bodice of black, a black head-dress, and long mantle with a high collar.

Her daughter, *la reine Margot*, more than atoned for her simplicity. Surely there is no brighter

figure in all history than hers. Exquisitely beautiful, radiantly dressed, a delightful singer and performer on the lute, a perfect *Terpsichore* in the dance, she could yet "write more correctly than most persons of her sex are capable of doing." This last touch is delicious. The brilliant Marguerite was no saint. She was vain, impulsive, and frivolous—perhaps worse; but her generous charities in her later years atoned for much. On her marriage day her stomacher was sewn so thick with pearls as to seem like a silver coat of mail. Her dress was of cloth of gold, and her gloves and handkerchiefs were edged with costly lace of gold thread.

But even her taste in dress has been criticised. She was perhaps a trifle too fond of jewels and tinsel and gold, which, though they well became her, are apt to transform a more commonplace person into a mere "spangled pudding," as somebody once put it.

At the Easter procession in Blois, Marguerite wore stars of pearls in her hair, and a dress of Oriental stuff bordered with cloth of gold, and so stiff with jewels that it was almost impossible to walk in it. But "*il faut souffrir pour être belle*," and the beautiful Marguerite was only too willing.

It was she who introduced low bodices, and long waists, and cushions on the haunches to swell out the skirts and make them the shape of the rotund and resonant drum.

Her lovely rival, the "*charmante Gabrielle*," was just as fond of dress as she, although not perhaps so gifted in inventing novelties. She paid nineteen hundred crowns for a handkerchief once, and Marie de Medici, the successor of both, was not a whit less extravagant. At the christening of one of her children she wore a dress on which were sewn not less than thirty-two thousand pearls and three thousand diamonds.

But if any one has surpassed Marguerite de Valois in extravagance of money and fantasy in dress, it was surely Marie Antoinette. She invented a most elaborate series of head-dresses. Sometimes a week was sufficient to stale a fashion and give her time to devise a new one. A mad dog, a cabriolet, a meadow, a forest, a torrent, a butterfly,—everything in heaven and earth seems to have served in turn as a model for Marie's *coiffures*. One of her most curious achievements was the hedgehog head-dress. The hair was left unpowdered, frizzled, and pulled out in points in the wildest possible way. A ribbon sustained

and encircled this hirsute monstrosity. Only once were fashion and simplicity synonymous. After one of her confinements all Marie's beautiful hair —*blonde cendrée* in colour—was cut short, and thus necessity set the mode.

It is she who has the credit of introducing the puce colour (a sort of chestnut brown) so fashionable last century. She wore it one day, and the king—poor Louis took an innocent delight in her toilettes and all her pretty trifling—told her it suited her *à ravir*. Next day the court was all in puce, and the *bourgeoisie* followed suit, for 'twas a thrifty and serviceable shade, and it is well to be modish and practical when one can.

One day, Marie found some peacock's feathers lying on her toilet-table. She stuck them in her hair, added some ostrich plumes, and was enchanted with the result. Straightway, befeathered heads were all the vogue, and some even attained the height of a foot and a half. Thus even in crests doth the human biped surpass its rival the cockatoo. A historian of the time compares the passing of the feathered court to the rustling of a forest on a windy day. Marie had herself painted, and sent the portrait to her mother; but

the stern old Empress returned the likeness with the remark, "*On s'était trompé, sans doute; je n'ai là trouvé le portrait d'une reine, mais celui d'une actrice ; j'attends le véritable.*"

It is not a little pitiful to think of the melancholy *cul de sac* into which the path of this "brightest appearance," as Carlyle calls her, leads. There were no fanciful head-dresses, no charming dairymaid costumes for Marie after the terrible Third Estate had arisen in its strength. She had not even the consolation, like the Queen of Scots, of quitting life, with dramatic *éclat*, in a startling and suitable costume. A simple dress of white piqué was all poor Marie Antoinette had to die in ; yet was it a costume of far brighter significance than the funereal satin and lurid velvet of the crafty Mary Stuart.

Both of Napoleon's wives were queens of dress. The Empress Joséphine is still a byword for the charmingest taste in robes, society, art, and literature. The modes of her time surpass all others in their perfection and simplicity. Maria Louisa, being an Archduchess, and conventional, was more ornate in her style. Napoleon I. must have been somewhat of a trial to both, for he insisted on laying down laws concerning their

dress; and surely there is no greater insult to a woman than this. The realm of dress is hers alone, and indiscreet man had best keep out of it. Indeed, it is only tyrants who have the temerity to rush in where the ordinary humble-minded man rightly fears to tread.

In modern times there has been no brighter queen of dress than the beautiful Eugénie. Never was Paris and its Court so gay and charming as under her rule. Her imagination, not finding in daily dress sufficient scope, inaugurated a brilliant series of fancy-dress balls, and gave to this dainty masquerading a stamp of style and distinction it has never lost.

With regret we leave these charming Courts of Dress. There is much that is monstrous, much that is artificial and inartistic in them; but they are invaluable, inasmuch as they keep uppermost the instinct of decoration, the love of the beautiful; and this, though rational dressers scorn it, and Puritans war against it, is no trifling matter. It is the same feeling that lies at the root of our love of art in all its forms; and she who is a true lover of letters, a devout student of art, will, you may be sure, prove the one most interested in keeping her home and her person lovely. It is the woman

without humour, without grace, without beauty, who becomes a rampant utilitarian, and affronts the world by her lurking breeches, her baggy skirts, her formless bodices, and her strange, unshapely hats.

CHAPTER XIII.

DRESS IN LITERATURE.

AS in history, as in pictures, so in literature dress plays no mean part. Do we ever think of Enid without her faded silk, of Hamlet without his suit of woe, or of Hetty Sorrel without her ribbons? All are part and parcel of each other. There are hundreds of charming pictures in prose and verse which would be incomplete and unlikely without the clothes.

What an exquisite picture is that of the fair Una!—

"One day, nigh weary of the irksome way,
From her unhasty beast she did alight;
And on the grass her dainty limbs did lay
In secret shadow, far from all men's sight;
From her fair head her fillet she undight,
And laid her stole aside: her angel's face,
As the great eye of heaven, shined bright,
And made a sunshine in the shady place,
Did never mortal eye behold such heavenly grace."

It makes us feel at home as never before with that

"chaste maiden," for it shows her very woman. Do we not all, when weary, retire to secret places, take out our hair-pins, and doff our outer robes of state? It is a scene in its exquisite delicacy to be matched only by that other where Madeline (ah! bitter chill it was),

> "... her vespers done,
> Of all her wreathèd pearls her hair she frees;
> Unclasps her warmèd jewels one by one;
> Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
> Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees,
> Half hidden, like a mermaid in seaweed."

Not but what Godiva is beautiful too, but Godiva arouses stronger feelings than mere delight in beauty, and when she fled

> "... to her inmost bower, and there
> Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,
> The grim Earl's gift; but ever at a breath
> She linger'd, looking like a summer moon,
> Half dipt in cloud: anon she shook her head,
> And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her knee;
> Unclad herself in haste,"

we are not merely ravished by the picture, but troubled a little by all it implies; for even if it never happened at all, the mere imaginings of it betrayed a wonderful belief in the magnificent possibilities of womanly self-sacrifice.

It is a little difficult to decide who is the real

poet-laureate of dress. Tennyson is richest in allusions, but Herrick has a very pretty appreciation of the details of the toilet, and Milton is full of quick, lightning pictures, that seem to say had he not been a Puritan he might have had a very choice taste in dress. Has no one ever thought what Milton might have been had he been brought up unevangelically and never come in contact with Oliver Cromwell? He seems to think of dress even when he doesn't mean to, for his very clouds "turn forth their silver lining on the night."

Think of divinest Melancholy,

> "Sober, steadfast, and demure,
> All in a robe of darkest grain,
> Flowing with majestic train,
> And sable stole of Cyprus lawn
> Over thy decent shoulders drawn."

Is there in all literature a more dignified and beautiful presence than this? It calls to mind how, in Puritan New England, Longfellow

> "... heard the trailing garments of the Night
> Sweep through her marble halls;
> I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
> From the celestial walls."

Companion picture in Milton is that of "civil-suited Morn"—

"Not trick'd and frounc'd as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kerchief'd in a comely cloud."

With what shy gusto does Milton refer to these bygone pranks of Aurora, and how gaily in other places does he write of "silver-buskined nymphs," "flower-inwoven tresses," "tinsel-slippered feet," and "flowery-kirtled naiades." How brief and effective is the exit of the "uncouth swain," as

"At last he rose and twitch'd his mantle blue,
To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new."

Chaucer, as was meet in a chronicler of men and manners, was minute and careful in his descriptions of dress; yet such was his art that he could be minute without being trivial, careful without being tedious. Madame Eglantine, with her "y-pynched" wimple and coral beads "gauded all nut green," is delicious; and the jolly wife of Bath, with her red stockings,

"Ful streite y-tyed, and shoon ful moiste and newe,"

is as personable a woman as one could wish to see. As for peccant Alisoun, the carpenter's wife, she must have been a gay "popelot," in her white embroidered "smok," her silk girdle, neat apron, and "shoon laced on her legges hie." No wonder

the miller called her a primrose and a "pigges-neye."

It cannot be denied that there are some very queer costumes in the older poets. Very peculiar must the lady in the "Lover's Complaint" have seemed with her

> "· · · platted hive of straw,
> Which fortified her visage from the sun."

She must have been a lady who paid considerable attention to details, for

> "Oft did she heave her napkin to her eyne,
> Which on it had conceited characters,
> Laund'ring the silken figures in the brine."

There is something very unpractical about the costume the shepherd promises his love,—

> "A cap of flowers, and a kirtle,
> Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;
>
> A gown made of the finest wool,
> Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
> Fair linèd slippers for the cold,
> With buckles of the purest gold.
>
> A belt of straw and ivy-buds,
> With coral clasps, and amber studs;"

and the "nymph" betrays her womanliness by the practical good sense of her reply. It is man who loses his head when in love, but women are nothing

if not concrete. "Thy gowns," she says to the shepherd,

> "Thy shoon, thy beds of roses,
> Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
> Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,
> In folly ripe, in reason rotten."

And yet the gown, at least, was designed on the purest Jaeger principles.

Dunbar has a most engaging picture in "The Golden Targe" of

> "A hundred ladies, lusty in their weeds,
> As fresh as flowèrs that in May upspreads,
> In kirtles green, withouten cap or bands,
> Their bright hairès hang glittering on the strands,
> In tresses clear tièd with golden threads;
> With neckès white, and middles small as wands."

Most industrious of all dress chroniclers is busy Mr. Pepys. He is always describing his own and his wife's clothes, and telling how much they cost; and it is notable that his cost a great deal more than hers did. Herrick is not nearly so complete. He dallies with trifles and ignores essentials. It is "the state of tiffany or cobweb lawn," drawn over Julia's "spotless breast," the bracelet "richly redolent" she sent him, and his mistress's silks, scented with ambergris, that delight him. His creed of dress is familiar.

"A sweet disorder in the dress
Kindles in clothes a wantonness;—
A lawn about the shoulders thrown
Into a fine distraction;
An erring lace which, here and there,
Enthrals the crimson stomacher;
A cuff neglectful, and thereby
Ribbands to flow confusedly;
A winning wave, deserving note,
In the tempestuous petticoat;
A careless shoe-string, in whose tie
I see a wild civility,—
Do more bewitch me, than when art
Is too precise in every part."

It is the envy of the precise, the consolation of the disorderly, the despair of lesser craftsmen, and the delight of all.

Nothing has given rise to more agreeable pleasantry than "the hoops' bewitching round." No less than fifty sylphs were told off to guard the "wide circumference" of Belinda's petticoat.

"Oft have we known that sevenfold fence to fail,
Tho' stiff with hoops, and armed with ribs of whale."

But there is a deceitfulness about whalebone that more than Belinda have experienced. Of all the fooling in connection with this, however, Isaac Bickerstaff's is the daintiest. When he holds his court of judgment on the petticoat, the maid is

taken out of it, and brought in separately. She is very pretty, and Isaac bids her sit by his side, and admonishes her more in sorrow than in anger. When she owns to adopting it on account of the fashion, he is ready at once to accept her excuse. "I always give great allowance to the fair sex," he says, "upon account of the fashion, and, therefore, was not displeased with the defence of the pretty criminal."

Isaac, indeed, displays a commendable lenience toward the sex. "I consider woman as a beautiful romantic animal that may be adorned with furs and feathers, pearls and diamonds, ores and silks. The lynx shall cast its skin at her feet to make her a tippet; the peacock, parrot, and swan shall pay contributions to her muff; the sea shall be searched for shells, and the rocks for gems, and every part of Nature furnish out its share towards the embellishment of a creature that is the most consummate work of it. All this I shall indulge them in, but as for the petticoat I have been speaking of, I neither can nor will allow it."

In noting the literature of dress two things astonish—first, that it is in men's writing we get the most charming descriptions and the prettiest allusions. Man takes an honest pleasure in woman's

clothes—woman, on the other hand, is guilty of a certain shamefacedness concerning her love of dress. Her clothes are her first thought, but, unless she be an unpretentious society woman, innocent of aspirations after moral elevation, she will not own to it, and always refers to the necessity of dress in an apologetic way. Therefore, women poets have little to say concerning dress; and here they betray their own folly, for they deprive themselves of many an opportunity.

Tennyson has set them a lesson in this. He delights in clothes, and never fails to record them, and dwell on the many little fancies concerning them. How anxious Alice, the Miller's daughter, is to please her lover in her dress!

> "This dress and that by turns you tried,
> Too fearful that you should not please.
> I loved you better for your fears,
> I knew you could not look but well;
> And dews that should have fall'n in tears
> I kiss'd away before they fell."

No wonder that when the enraptured lover sat down to write a song for her it was this tender anxiety of hers that came first to his mind, and that the song should be as much about her dress as about her.

"It is the miller's daughter,
And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel
That trembles in her ear;
For hid in ringlets day and night,
I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

"And I would be the girdle
About her dainty, dainty waist,
And her heart would beat against me,
In sorrow and in rest:
And I should know if it beat right,
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

"And I would be the necklace,
And all day long to fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom,
With her laughter or her sighs,
And I would be so light, so light,
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night."

His Arthurian ladies are very rich and dainty in their dress. Guinevere has indeed a singular fancy for grass-green; and it must have given to her "milk-white arms and shadowy hair" a rarely elfin grace.

"She seem'd a part of joyous Spring;
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
Buckled with golden clasps before.
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
Closed in a golden ring."

And another time she stood,

> "All glittering, like May sunshine in May,
> In green and gold and plumed with green."

The "lily-maid" is too ethereal to concern herself much about clothes, and save for the red sleeve broidered with pearls that Lancelot wore at the tournament we hear little of it.

As for Vivien—we fain had heard more of Vivien's clothes, for therein part of the secret of how she beguiled the wisest of men must have been hid. There is one seductive description of her,—

> "A twist of gold was round her hair; a robe
> Of samite without price, that more exprest
> Than hid her, clung about her lissome limbs,
> In colour like the satin-shining palm,
> On sallows in the windy gleams of March."

There is something mystic and witch-like in the very colour, for Tennyson seems to refer to the Palm willow that breaks into silky grey-green catkins in time for children to carry branches of it in their hands on Palm Sunday.

But the story of Enid is a veritable idyl of dress from the moment Geraint learns to love her in her faded silk until, after her long trial, she returns to Court, and the "great Queen" clothes her "in

apparel like the day." At the beginning, when Geraint bids her ride to Court with him, her first thought is of her garb :

> "For as a leaf in mid-November is
> To what it was, in mid-October seem'd
> The dress that now she look'd on to the dress
> She look'd on ere the coming of Geraint."

And therewith falls a longing,

> ". . . for a dress
> All branch'd and flower'd with gold ;"

and so drifts into sweet dreamy sleep, and in her dreams sees a garden, the very flowers in which are like unto garnets and turkoises to her envious eyes. The ladies are in silver tissue, the children in cloth of gold. And when she wakes there before her is the very gown she longed for, and her cup of joy is full. Yet how meekly she lays it aside at her lover's wish, and how magnificently it is made up to her ! for Guinevere, "with her own white hand," arrayed and decked her. "like the sun in heaven," and Geraint loved

> "To make her beauty vary day by day,
> In crimsons and in purples and in gems."

Earl Doorm knew what he was doing when, as

prime part of his temptation of Enid, he made his gentlewomen display

> "... a splendid silk of foreign loom
> Where like a shoaling sea the lovely blue
> Play'd into green, and thicker down the front
> With jewels than the sward with drops of dew,
> When all night long a cloud clings to the hill,
> And with the dawn ascending lets the day
> Strike where it clung; so thickly shone the gems."

But Enid is faithful in spite of all, and after her return to Court her dress was more splendid than ever before. For Geraint had a very pretty taste in dress, and decked himself as well as his bride. He wore

> "A purple scarf, at either end whereof
> There swung an apple of the purest gold,
> Sway'd round about him, as he gallop'd up
> To join them, glancing like a dragon-fly
> In summer suit and silks of holiday."

As with most poets, Tennyson's *premier amour* in dress is a white one, and he always returns to it. The gardener's daughter is "gown'd in pure white"; and the queen of old romance, who comes to fetch the blameless king, raises her arm; "clothed in white samite," through the water to answer his signal. This samite, so often referred to in old chronicles, is simply a silk of extra fine quality and thickness.

The name is corrupted from *examitum*, which is made up of two Greek words, ἑξ (six) and μίτοι (threads), and means that it was six-threaded, and therefore unusually rich.

What a number of pretty ghosts in white drift through the literature of all time! The eerie enchantress Christabel met in the wood was

> "Drest in a silken robe of white
> That shadowy in the moonlight shone:
> The neck that made that white robe wan,
> Her stately arms and neck were bare."

Indeed, as Coleridge justly observes,

> "I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
> A lady so richly clad as she."

Lady Geraldine, when she enthrals the incautious poet in the depths of her ancestral woods, is

> ". . . bareheaded, with the flowing
> Of the virginal white vesture gathered closely to her throat,
> And the golden ringlets in her neck just quickened by her going,
> And appearing to breathe sun for air."

Her daily wear in Town was as romantic and more magnificent:

> "She appeared, to my abasement,
> In her lovely silken murmur like an angel clad in wings."

But one could expect nothing less of a lady who

was guilty of an "ermined pride," and allowed "palpitating engines" to "snort in steam across her acres." Of course, in the last scene of all, when the lady is undignified enough to hide behind the poet's curtains, we are told nothing of her costume. This is very like a woman. Mrs. Browning would feel that that moment of supremest passion was one where dress had no place. Tennyson could have told her dress, however, and yet been every whit as passionate as she. Even the ecstatic nun, who stands at the convent window at midnight, does not, for all her religious fervour, forget to allude to her garments,—

> "As these white robes are soiled and dark
> To yonder shining round."

But these are the very exaltations, the finest exhalations of dress, and dress is not a winged theme whereon one may always soar. It has an awkward way of flopping unexpectedly to earth that is trying to the sentimental mind. Yet even in its practicality, it is, at times, instinct with poetic suggestion; as, for instance, in the case of Jeanie Deans and the snood. The silken ribbon is more to her than a bit of "speckled vanity"; it is the type of virginity; and the thought that

never again can her beloved sister Effie wear this typical adornment melts her honest heart with grief. Sir Walter, like all great-souled romantic people, delighted in costume, and loved to dress his puppets in the gayest and most fanciful way possible. Nothing is a greater aid than dress in making the historic past live again. The faithful Rebecca, the skittish Catherine Seyton, and that proud Highland maid, Flora McIvor, are independent of their clothes; but Di Vernon and her costumes are more intimately associated; and does not the whole charm of fair Lilias in "Redgauntlet" lie in her bewitchingly mysterious green mantle? Across the misty valley of memory her bright eyes still gleam, witchlike and enchanting, from amid its folds. Catherine Glover embroidering gloves in mediæval Perth gives a reminiscent charm even to modern hand-gear; and what can be more simple and effective in its way than the description of "fair Ellen's" attire?

"A chieftain's daughter seemed the maid;
Her satin snood, her silken plaid,
Her golden brooch, such birth betrayed.
And seldom was a snood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing;

And seldom o'er a breast so fair,
Mantled a plaid with modest care,
And never brooch the folds combined
Above a heart more good and kind."

Similar in its striking simplicity is the picture of Evangeline as she passed down the village street,—

"Wearing her Norman cap, and her kirtle of blue, and the ear-rings
Brought in the olden times from France, and since as an heirloom,
Handed down from mother to child, through long generations."

There is a primeval directness about some of these simpler descriptions that impresses them more strongly on the memory than those far more subtle and poetic. Charles Lamb recognised their value, and quotes one excellent one,—

"When we came down through Glasgow town
We were a comely sight to see;
My love was clad in black velvet
And I myself in cramasie."

The writers of to-day are not content with description, which, as Disraeli truly remarked, is often a bore both to the describer and the describee; but they put a world of meaning into the most

innocent and inoffensive items of dress. Perhaps it was Carlyle who set the fashion; but if he originated the "Spirit of Clothes" others have done their share in fostering it. What would the *Kreutzer Sonata* have been without the heroine's jersey? That harmless and comfortable garment is made a heinous criminal, and the desperate tragedy, by its aid, is transformed into a ludicrous farce. But Tolstoy always insists on dress. Here is another passage of his concerning it:—

"Boris, putting his arm round his wife, but very carefully, for fear of tearing a certain lace kerchief for which he had paid a large sum, pressed a kiss exactly in the middle of her lips."

A finer meaning was given to dress by Mérimée, when he gaily banters his charming "inconnue" (than whom there is no more vivid personality amongst named and indexed women) on her unfulfilled desire for a "*cachemir bleu*." It was in the days when cashmeres really came from India, and were worthy of aspiration. Everything at the time unattainable, in especial the seat in the French Academy for which he canvassed so indefatigably, was after that a "cachemir bleu." Gautier disdains not to draw illustrations for the most dignified themes from dress. In "*L'Art*" he says:—

"Fi du rhythme commode
Comme un soulier trop grand
Du mode qui tout pied quitte et prend";

and again in "Les Marroniers" he talks of

"La feuille hier encor pliée
Dans son étroit corset d' hiver."

Is not his famous "Symphonie en blanc majeur" full of dress, transfigured and irradiated by "the light that never was on sea or land"?

The finest humours have delighted in dress. Lamb has concerned himself about "the melancholy of tailors," and has waxed eloquent over the uses of dress in journalism, and the boundless "copy" provided in his day by a sudden rage for pink stockings.

"O the conceits which we varied upon *red* in all its prismatic differences! from the trite and obvious flower of Cytherea, to the flaming costume of the lady that sitteth upon 'many waters.' . . . But, above all, that conceit arrided us most at that time, and still tickles our midriff to remember, where, allusively to the flight of Astræa—*ultima cœlestum terras reliquit*—we pronounced—in reference to the stockings still — that MODESTY TAKING HER FINAL LEAVE OF MORTALS, HER LAST

BLUSH WAS VISIBLE IN HER ASCENT TO THE HEAVENS BY THE TRACK OF THE GLOWING INSTEP." This is what one might call the veritable apotheosis of journalism.

Some people have even found inspiration in dress. Wagner wore the most extraordinarily gay things, and slept beneath silk coverlets fluttering with bows of ribbon. Balzac wrote as rapturously as a girl of her first ball-dress concerning a new silk dressing-gown, embroidered with palm-leaves and flecked with gold. "One feels clothed as with the sun!" he cries delightedly. Dr. Wendell Holmes soars high when he says: "Take a real woman at her best moments—well-dressed enough to be pleased with herself, and not so resplendent as to be a show, and what has social life to compare with one of those vital interchanges of thought and feeling with her that make an hour memorable?" His after-remarks seem to indicate that he agrees with the gentleman who

> "... always thought a tinge of blue
> Improved a charming woman's stockings."

This has been but a wanton roaming in the green and shady lane of literature. The flowers grow so thickly that those I have pulled do not exhaust,

although they will serve to illustrate, the hedge-rows. The complete anthology of dress is yet to be written; meanwhile, in default of the fuller bouquet, this simple nosegay of wayside blossoms must suffice.

CHAPTER XIV.

DRESS IN PICTURES.

IT is a mighty difficult matter to dress for a picture. There is a vehemence—one may so call it—of colour in some pictured robes, that if seen without the prisoning gold frame would affront and mortify our sense of decorum. Consider only Mrs. Siddons' dress in the Gainsborough portrait in the National Gallery. Were we to meet her on the Mall in that bright blue-and-white silk, with that gaudy scarf wound round her shoulders, how inelegant we should deem her! Yet how admirably do the bright, bold colours throw into relief the dignity and refinement of her face! The same dress on a lesser woman would have led us to forget the wearer, and criticise (adversely, according to modern canons of taste) the gown, but on Mrs. Siddons, "who has lent to the very syllables of her name an elevation and a charm," it is absolutely subordinate.

No painter has insisted more strongly on the

personality of his sitters than Gainsborough. In many another portrait of his are the details of dress softened and smoothed away so as not to distract attention from the face, but here he knew that was unnecessary. Only, with his usual fine taste, he has seen that the garish colour does not approach and so insult the face. The large black velvet hat above is in perfect harmony with it. When you see the picture first you say, "What a bright dress! Who dares wear it?" You look up to the face, and the proud dark eyes, "lovely in their strength," answer, "I," and straightway you forget it all and look no further. Were it not that feminine curiosity causes you to turn and see what kind of headgear was worn by this woman who was once "the mode," you would never notice her hat at all.

Gainsborough treats Mrs. Sheridan somewhat differently. Both in the portrait with Mrs. Tickell, and the one with her brother, he leaves her dress undefined. Yet surely the "Maid of Bath" was an even lovelier woman than Mrs. Siddons. More than one contemporary, although upon what foundation of experience I cannot tell, has described her beauty as being that of an angel; yet, perhaps, her personality was less strong than that of Mrs. Siddons, and less fitted to come off conqueror in a contest with dress.

Hazlitt says of the great *tragédienne* that she "had no need of the robes, the sweeping trains, the ornaments of the stage; in herself she is as great as any being she ever represented." Mrs. Sheridan, on the other hand, seems to have been one of those rare and exquisite women who, although not without talent, yet find their best pleasure in "perfect wifehood and pure lowlihood," and whose dispositions are characterised rather by tenderness and graciousness than by the "wayes so dangerous" that make for character.

In both portraits Mrs. Sheridan is robed in blue, but, in the picture she shares with Mrs. Tickell, the blue is one that shades delicately and deliciously into green. The whole painting is full of bewitching grace. It has all the unreality, the transparent striving after effect, characteristic of the portraits of the time. How could the charming pair ever imagine they could look natural sitting out o' doors in such flimsy garments, and with a guitar and music as if all ready for a concert? They are as innocent and absurd-looking as the primroses that bloom beside them beneath an autumnal tree. Yet how perfectly all the colours blend! Mrs. Tickell's dress is just the shade of beech-leaves in autumn, which look as if all summer they had stolen

and secreted sunshine, so as to be able to produce it in October, when the supply was getting scarce. The inartistic details of the mode of the time are, in both dresses, suggested but not expressed. It would be well if some of our modern artists could learn from this to exercise a similar wise restraint. Every season our galleries are full of portraits of women, whose dresses, illustrative of the mode of the month, are painted into horrible perpetuity. Gainsborough, however, painted not for the day, but for all time, and would allow nothing but the beautiful in dress to descend to posterity.

In Reynolds's portrait of Mrs. Siddons there are more accessories and a quieter dress; but when he painted her as the "Tragic Muse" he attained the sublime. It is a wonder in colour, of warm browns and sober greys. The browns are darkest just where her knees obtrude, brightest where her garments fall loosely round her feet. The tones near her face are in perfect harmony with the warm brightness of her hair and the dignified pallor of her complexion. A gleaming line of gold outlines the edge of her drapery, and here Sir Joshua has writ his name, that "he might go down to posterity on the hem of her garment." The robes she wears are emphatically *picture* draperies; and here we

note another difference between dress in paint and dress on the street. The older artists loved to cumber their sitters with an abundance of drapery. They are "enchained hopelessly" in their own petticoats; and imaginative persons, when they employ the favourite device of causing people to step out of their frames, and corporealise themselves again for a brief space, forget this. The hapless ghosts would trip and stumble over their own skirts, and probably lose their tempers badly, and be of very little use to point the moral or the satire as expected of them.

The realism of modern art has remedied this, however. Millet has shown us how the simple peasant's gown may become as picturesque as the voluminous draperies of the great ladies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

There is no more beautiful costume for painting than the modified classic garb, that won acceptance near the end of last century. The scanty gauze draperies, the short waists, the low bodices, the gentle natural swell of the bosom, half-defined, half-concealed, the softly-folded sash or delicately-wrought zone, the puffed babyish sleeves that made young arms look doubly soft and tender—all are ravishing. It is a dress that breathes the very air

of the age of Innocence, and gives to womanhood the ineffable charm of simplicity and youth. Just such a robe might Shelley's Asia—did she wear aught save "the soft light of *her* own smiles"—have worn when Prometheus wooed her in the dewy dawn of time. It is a robe to think of and to paint, but not, in these latter days of tyrannic good sense, to *wear*. The very idea makes us shiver. Best not to let the coarse breath of reality sully and pollute it, but let us keep it purely perfect as it is for the dream-children of our imagination.

But although old pictures are an admirable guide to colour, yet their leading may not be too blindly followed. Brighter colour is permissible on canvas than off it. In Lely's portrait, the Countess of Rochester is arrayed in a dress of Dresden china-blue, vastly effective in the proper light, and shut within a big gilt frame, yet how impossible for every-day wear! Lady Bellasys—another of Lely's beauties—is pictured in a dress of rich flame red, and a mantle of deep sapphire blue. It is a standard combination, and our old illuminators knew its value, but now we reserve it for cross-stitch, and frame ourselves in soberer hues. Lady Middleton (by Kneller) is arrayed in just such another fiery garment. Its brilliance accentuates

the singular refinement and delicacy of its wearer's face. It is a colour that no woman with the least taint of coarseness could wear with impunity.

Green is another colour admirable to paint, difficult to wear. The "Italian Lady" in Hampton Court becomes it so well that we all would fain have just such another gown as hers. Yet a glance at the "Beata Beatrix" of Rossetti in the National Gallery is sufficient to check our infatuation. She may be "beata," but she does not look it there. Was it not enough to have her pallor rendered sickly by the red (as of the homely carrot) of her hair, that the artist deemed it necessary to make matters worse by arraying her so gruesomely in green?

"Many a green gown has been given," but never a greener than this. It suggests green sickness, Robespierre, and the fading year mourning its own decay. Nor does the terra-cotta undergarment better matters much. It, too, is sad, sadder than the hair, dismally suggestive of smoked brick, of an effete æstheticism, and strange dim rooms haunted by waistless ghosts, and all a-flutter with peacocks' feathers.

In the "St. Cecilia" of Dulwich Gallery we find the same colours very differently treated. The

gentle and thoughtful face harmonises finely with the soft, rich, reddish gown; whilst the two shades of green—a yellow sage and a dark myrtle—in her reversible mantle, blend as naturally and simply as the greens of autumn.

Therefore it cannot be that the combination is an inartistic one; and by the difference in its treatment we see that not only good colour is required for a perfect dress, but also a certain indescribable adaptation which we cannot define, but are led to recognise by something of the same instinct that tells us when verse rings true, and chords harmoniously unite together.

One of the pleasantest pictures in Hampton Court is that of the "Lady playing on the Virginal." Her hair, of Venetian red, is parted, "Madonna-wise, on either side her head," and the style is redeemed from its too-frequent insipidity by the regal plait that rises like a coronet behind. The dress is simple, reasonable, and picturesque; perfect to wear, and perfect to paint. Its colour is warm yet sober, akin to chestnut, yet with something of the inner radiance of the trunk of a Scotch fir, as revealed when the bark has freshly peeled off and left it bare.

But although it is well to see beauty clothed

"in apparel like the day," there are women who in the soberest livery look their brightest. There is Miss Pitt in Hampton Court. How demure and dainty she seems in her sober gown and tidy tuckers! With what a wholesome sprightliness do her bright eyes look out at you. Here, you say at once, is a woman to know; for she and her dress are both workmanlike and helpful. She would make a hearty friend, a useful wife, and a careful mother. More coquettish is La Belle Stuart. She wears her sad-coloured gown with a reason, for she knows that against its simplicity her lovely face seems more classically fair than ever. She it is whom Charles II. promoted to her perpetual throne on our pennies, where, with helmet and trident, she has sat in state these two hundred years.

And after all La Belle Stuart is only human. 'Tis all very well to prate concerning the subordination of dress, but, as a rule, simplicity and severity are resorted to only by the most cunning of the sex, the better to set forth their charms. The true woman loves the daintiest of gear, the finest of lace, the softest of silks, and the richest of brocades as devoutly and sincerely as the Tobacco-man (perhaps the finest species of his

kind) adores his pipe. Indeed, a woman who does not, is only half a woman—is a traitor to her sex, and her sisters should have none of her.

Therefore with a glad heart shall we turn from these cunning, affected hussies, who afflict our consciences and contradict our instincts by their conventual garb, to look upon some of the pictured daintinesses of old. Was there ever more exquisite lace than that which Van Dyck loved to paint? Nor ever surely was there a mere accessory better worth painting. To-day people have a reckless way of bunching and frilling it up so that the delicate grace of its design is scarce seen at all. But in the seventeenth century they knew better. They wore a rich plain frill round their shoulders, just full enough to rest easily, yet plain enough to display its beauty; and some of these lace collars are lovely enough to stir the heart of woman to its deepest depths. A sad feature was the way in which careless man was allowed to disport himself in this costly adornment. Better far had it been left to the kindly care of appreciative woman, and then perhaps more of it had survived to be handed down for the reverential worship of the enthusiasts of to-day.

Henrietta Maria, as painted by Van Dyck, gives evidence of a fine taste for the delicacies of dress. True, she is a little careless about her waist, and that which she professes to call one would have raised the fierce indignation of Catherine de Medici, —vigorous champion of the thirteen-inch span. Her white satin dress is richly bedight with silver embroidery, her full sleeves terminate at the elbow in a most ravishing ruche of diaphanous lace, whilst a wonderful lace collar, shaped like our modern sailor one, displays itself behind.

The men's sleeve ruffles and cravat bows last century had something very niodish about them, and lately women have taken them for their own. The only marvel is that they didn't think of doing so before. The worst of this popularity is that they have been travestied by 'Arriet in the vilest of imitation lace; and surely of all inventions this of cheap manufactured lace has been most grievous.

There are pictures one may criticise, there are pictures one may gather ideas from, but there are other pictures one prefers simply to enjoy. Of such is the portrait of Miss Caroline Fry, by Sir Thomas Lawrence. The brilliant face, as instinct with character and intelligence as with beauty, is becomingly framed in short dark curls. The low

white dress is defined at the edge by a narrow line of gold trimming, cunningly simple. A babyish blue sash reveals itself beneath the breast, and is in delicious contrast to the maturity and vigour of the face. There is an enchanting little tucker round her shoulder, and an impossible and unnecessary crimson drapery round her shoulders. Her arms are covered to the wrist by diaphanous sleeves, and this makes you angry. You wish to know whether the arms side with the strong capable face or the innocent attractive dress; but Miss Caroline has retained that secret in reserve, and it is the woman with a reserve who best and most lastingly charms.

Another delightful picture is that of Madame Pompadour in Hampton Court. What fluttering of bright ribbons, what piquancy of device is there! You are half distracted. You note the colour of her ribbons, and the bright eyes and gracious smile reproach you. Your eye wanders to the tiny rose-bud pattern of her dress, to the grace of her lace cap, to the coquettish knot of ribbons beneath her dainty chin; you feel as if no woman is really complete without just such another cap. It is a case of perfect harmony between dress and wearer, of an amicable and joyous partnership. They are

in league to discompose and conquer you, and in this union is the greatest strength of all. Let no woman allow her dress to be her enemy. It must either be in friendly opposition or submissive subjection to her, if she wish to lastingly delight mankind.

Printed by Hazell, Watson, & Viney, Ld., London and Aylesbury.

00098926

Digitized with financial assistance from
Hermès India
a project facilitated by the Rotary Club of Bombay
on 10 August, 2018